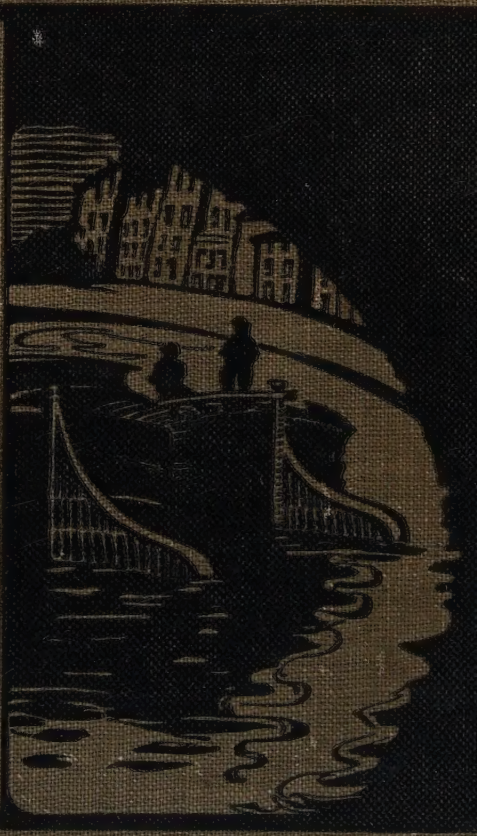
SHADOWS OF OLD PARIS

by

G. DUVAL



Illustrated by J. GAVIN

LLOYD WENGROW

SHADOWS OF OLD PARIS

THE SEINE FROM A BALCONY ON THE QUAI D'ORSAY.

FRONTISPIECE.

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G. DUVAL

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J. GAVIN

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INTRODUCTION

To most Anglo-Saxons and Americans, Paris of the Twentieth Century is almost as familiar as their native cities. Its crowded Boulevards, brilliant cafés, theatres, and shops are the playground of hundreds of thousands of English-speaking tourists, whose yearly trip to the "Gay City" is a regular chapter in the programme of diversion.

Though every man is not a Frenchman, each may become, to a certain extent, a Parisian; for the asphalt is hospitable to all nationalities alike, if they will but bring with them a capacity for enjoyment and the wherewithal to pay for it liberally.

Yet, amongst the crowds of idlers and pleasure-seekers, of students even, who make the French capital temporarily their home, there are few lovers of tradition curious enough to turn from the dazzling modern city of pleasure, and plunge into the dingy Paris of the past, itself a town within a town, rapidly being swallowed up by the hydra-headed demon of improvement, with its insatiable appetite and power of destruction.

Along the quays, some of the older houses yet remain; in the streets adjoining, slumbering amid gardens, lie the stately homes of the nobility, a few still occupied by the great families who have inhabited them for generations. But they are fast disappearing, and many have fallen from their high estate to serve as warehouses, or for commercial purposes, or, even, as tenements for the poorest classes of artisans and workmen.

Here and there, in the narrow streets of a sordid quarter, mouldy with grime and dampness, a proud frontage will rear its graceful proportions, keeping, though in dilapidated surroundings, its birthright of dignity and beauty. We have wandered into these alleys and byways of the great City, from

which the tide of fashion and progress has long retired; we have re-peopled streets and houses with the men and women of a bygone world, recalled the stories of their passions, mused over the tragedy and comedy of their lives and deaths.

The whole story of France is written on the walls of Paris; and, to a student of history, what is more passionately eloquent, what more enigmatic and mysterious, than those silent stones? Daily, hourly, the destroying pickaxe is busily at work. It must be so. It were folly to sacrifice the lives and health of thousands for the sentiment of the antiquary. Yet, it is a world of strange interest and beauty that is passing so rapidly; a world that will never be reconstructed, save in the memory of a few lovers of the picturesque.

Can we watch it crumble to ashes without a feeling of sorrowful regret? As it disappears for ever from view, we would hold those vanishing shadows in a picture.

ARMS OF PARIS.
4, RUE DE L'ESTRAPADE.

CONTENTS

Chapter I—Palais Royal

Page

Richelieu builds a Palace on classic ground—The mob invades the child-king's bedchamber—Molière stricken while acting Argon—The Regent—John Law's schemes—Cartouche, King of Thieves—Louis the Pious—The young Duc de Chartres saves a historic Theatre—Marie Antoinette's dislike of d'Orléans—Phillipe Egalité—The Revolution gathers—Camille Desmoulins—The Revolutionary Cafés—The gambling houses under the " Terror "—The Romance of Emélie de Sainte-Amaranthe—The Convoy of the 17th of June—The Palais-Royal sinks into oblivion 1

Chapter II—The Convent of "Les Carmes"

Marie de Medicis founds the Convent, 1613—The Carmes turned into a Revolutionary Prison—Alarm !—The Massacres of the 2nd of September—The future Empress Josephine and Madame Tallien, companions in misfortune—Mademoiselle de Soyecourt takes the veil—The life of a Carmelite—A devoted Soul 24

Chapter III—Place des Vosges

The Chateau des Tournelles—A fatal tourney—A celebrated duelling ground—A King's architectural dream—The heart of the 17th century world of fashion—A disastrous duel—The birthplace of the Marquise de Sévigné—Place de l'Indivisibilité—Gauthier and Hugo—Mademoiselle Rachel's funeral—Abandonment of la Place Royal 41

Chapter IV—St. Gervais and Scarron's Marriage

A fashionable place of worship—Paul Scarron—His misfortunes make him a poet—Francoise d'Aubigné, future Marquise de Maintenon—A devoted friend—A disinterested wooer—A strange couple—Scarron's epitaph 52

Chapter V—The Seine Page

The personality of Rivers—Notre Dame—Symbolism of the Arms of the City of Paris—The Palace of Merovingien Kings becomes the Revolutionary Tribunal—The Morgue—The " Bridge of Tears "—A fatal gateway—Fouquier-Tinville—An open-air Salon—The Story of a gruesome partnership—A house with a history—The girlhood of Madame Roland—The last hours of a revolutionary heroine... 61

Chapter VI—Around some old Inns

The part inns play in history—The origin of hostelries—Fançois Villon a self-invited guest—Noted Sons of Innkeepers—An old " Auberge "—A duel of wits—" L'Epée de Bois " Scene of Law's reign of Speculation—Strange Survivals from past Centuries—Napoleon's first adventure—Robespierre's clever adversary—Marmontil's mysterious allusions—The last of the Stage-coach 75

Chapter VII—Notre Dame de Thermidor

Donna Theresa arrives in Paris—The Marquise de Fontenay—A predestined encounter—The flight from the whirlwind—Life in Bordeaux under the " Terror "—Tallien—A bold resolve—Prison walls—A Goddess of Liberty—Theresa's bounty—Robespierre, the enemy—Into the furnace—A woman's power—Thermidor Rescue—A vice queen—Divorce—Tallien's last ray of Sunshine—A forgotten hero—The end of a dream 97

Chapter VIII—Along the Quais

" La Tour de Nesle "—" La Pré aux clercs "—Reformers and Hugenots—Mazarin's will—Old bricks and their legends—A daring plot—King Henry and the boatman of the Louvre Ferry—The house where Voltaire died—A funereal drive—Three Sisters—The Bookstalls along the River 124

Chapter IX—Old Streets Page

Mouffetard and its inhabitants—The remnants of a scholastic Paris in the Middle Ages—A modern ghetto—The Rue Mouffetard and its inhabitants—The remnants of a scholastic quarter—The Church of St. Severin—The Rue St. Jacques and its memories—"Sœur Louise de la Misericorde," Duchesse de Vallière 140

Chapter X—Montmartre

"La Butte"—The Roman Mons Martis—Vineyards and Limekilns—Ignace de Loyola—Freemasons and Jesuits—Genii and Fairies—Tasso's impressions in 1570—The oldest mill in the world—The defence of Montmartre against the Allies, 1815—A noted family of millers 152

Chapter XI—Ninon de Lenclos

Ninon's antecedents—Mdlle. de Lenclos chooses a career—A Courtesan and a great lady—Villarceaux—Ninon incurs the Queen's disapprobation—Christina of Sweden visits Mdlle. de Lenclos in prison—Ninon's philosophy—A passion at the age of 75 years—The warning—The house in the Rue des Tournelles—A vision 164

Chapter XII—"Le Marais"

A Roman battlefield—The charm of the Marais—Splendid mansions—Picturesque streets—L'Hotel de Sens—The drama of the Lyons Mail—L'Hotel Carnavalet—The Convents—The fight around the barricade of St. Merri—The Hotel de Beauvais—The evening of the 9th Thermidor 177

Chapter XIII—

L'Ille aux Vaches—Tourneys and Pageants—The enchanting Island—Hotel Lambert and Madame du Châtelet—The Duc de Lauzan—"La Grande" Mademoiselle's marriage—The Haschisch Eater's Club—Forgotten homes of Princes of Finance 193

Chapter XIV—A Folly Page

A fashionable craze in the 18th Century—An epoch of pleasure—Corvisard's home—Rodin's Atelier—Old stones crumble 205

Chapter XV—The Marquise de Brinvilliers

An age of mysticism—Nicolas la Reynie—The Marquise de Brinvilliers' youth—An unfortunate frequentation—The Marquise's plots—A fiend incarnate—Suspicions give place to certitude—Flight—Capture and trial—An iron nature—Softening influence—L'Abbé Pirot—Marie Madeleine the penitent—An apotheosis 209

Chapter XVI—The Sorcerers of the 17th Century

Madame de Sévigné's prediction—Louis XIV.'s Lieutenant of Police—A nest of Criminals—A Sorceress—" La chambre ardente "—A Society imbued with superstition—A great Magistrate—A Monarch's humiliation—The Marquise de Montespan—The old house in the Rue St. Claude—Cagliostro —The death knell of quackery 238

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

The Seine, from a balcony on the Quai d'Orsay — Frontispiece
Arms of Paris, 14, Rue de L'Estrapade vi
The Palais Royal ... ... Facing page 1
Headpiece 1
At the Palais Royal 2
Chest belonging to Cardinal Richelieu 23
Headpiece 24
Convent of "Les Carmes" ... ... Facing page 24
Entrance at which the Priests were massacred 27
Convent of "Les Carmes." Sun Dial, beside which Monseigneur D'Arles was murdered 31
Headpiece 41
Place des Vosges 43
Gateway of the Place des Vosges 47
House of Théophile Gautier, Place des Vosges ... ... Facing page 50
Tail Piece 51
XVII Century Balcony in the Rue St. Antoine 52
Impasse St. Gervais ... ... Facing page 52
St. Gervais. XVI Century Carving 60
Ile de la Cite ... ... Facing page 61
Headpiece 61
Gate of the Palais de Justice 63
Gargoyles of Notre Dame 74
Entrance to the "Soleil d'Or" 75
Courtyard of the "Compas d'Or" ... ... Facing page 80
Rue de Venise 85
Cour de Rouen 89
The Cheval Blanc 93
Diligence. XVII Century 96
Sign of the Salamander 97
Doorway, St. Eustache 99
Doorway of Hotel Defontenay 101
Convent des Cordeliers ... ... Facing page 112
Staircase, 29, Quai de Bourbon 123
Sign of l'Homme Armé 124
Bookstalls on the Quay ... ... Facing page 126
Palais Mazarin, now the seat of the Academie Française 129
The Seine below Paris 139
Fountain, Rue Garanciere 140
The "Cour du Dragon" ... ... Facing page 141

Page

The Rue des Patriarches 143
The Rue Mouffetard ... ... Facing page 144
Church of St. Severin ... ... Facing page 146
Carmelite Convent, Rue St. Jacques 148
Gothic Well, Rue St. Jacques 150
Old Sign, Rue Geoffroy St. Hilaire 151
Hill of Montmartre, from the River 152
Le Moulin de la Galette ... ... Facing page 153
The Mill of Montmartre 162
Old Fountain-head in the Marais 163
House of Ninon de Lenclos, in the Rue des Tournelles 166
XVII Century staircase 176
Hotel de Sens ... ... Facing page 177
Headpiece 177
Well, Hotel de Sens 180
56, Rue de la Verrerie 183
The Rue Taillepain 185
The Rue Brisemiche 187
Cloister, Rue des Archives 25 ... ... Facing page 188
The Rue de l'Hotel de Ville 190
Table on which Robespierre was thrown wounded on the 9th Thermidor 192
The End of the Ile St. Louis 193
The Hotel Lambert ... ... Facing page 196
Old Stairway, Quai de Bethune 202
La Folie Titon 204
Hotel Corvisard 205
Colonnade in the House of Corvisard ... ... Facing page 206
Madame Dubarry's Sleigh 208
XV Century Carving 209
House of Madame de Brinvilliers ... ... Facing page 210
Staircase in the House of Madame de Brinvilliers 213
Keystone of the XII Century 227
Door-knocker in La Reynie's House 228
Rue Quincampoix, where La Reynie lived 230
La Reynie's House, Rue Quincampoix 238

THE PALAIS ROYAL

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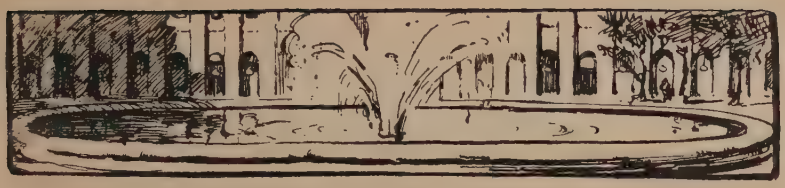

THE FOUNTAIN OF THE PALAIS ROYAL

CHAPTER I

PALAIS ROYAL

To tell the history of the Palais Royal would be to write that of France itself, a task which we have neither the space, nor the presumption, to undertake. We are but idle strollers in the by-paths and passages of those palaces where grave councils are debating. It is not into the glare of important events that we would lead the indulgent reader, but rather among the shadows they project, and amongst the men and women who unconsciously acted, thought, and moved as mere puppets in the great pageant of Destiny.

For years the Palais Royal has been but a thing of the past. Yet to enter upon its echoing solitude is to summon again to life the entire *dramatis personæ* of the national history, for it was, for centuries, the vibrant stage of events. To-day, in its mellow age, it seems some palace of a sleeping beauty, upon whose threshold all real life has stopped, leaving it peopled only with dreams. The din of modern commercial Paris buzzes and hums like a hive of bees around this secluded cell, in which lies imprisoned for ever their slumbering Queen.

For the Palais Royal is never likely to awake. Indeed, it is such a mere shell that its condemnation is inevitable. The bustling thoroughfares, the crowded streets of the City, are jealous of this aristocratic sister and intolerant of her useless idleness. It is a place of shadows and reveries—a place in which to while away a sunny afternoon beneath the light, shady alleys of the garden, or to wander under the peaceful arcades, whose half-empty shops have long ago given up expecting customers.

We can sit quietly on a fair spring or autumn afternoon, with an open book, unread, upon our knee, and let our thoughts wander back to all the multi-coloured past which shows us how merely human were the mighty ones of the Earth; how frail the strongest; how uncertain the most determined; and how each and all alike, from the greatest to the least, were but as thistle-down, blown by the winds of Fate.

On the ground on which the Romans had built their villas, where Jeanne d'Arc had been wounded by the English arrows, on the site of the ancient "Porte St. Honoré," besieged and retaken a hundred times in as many wars, Richelieu determined to erect himself a palace. Old walls were demolished, tenants unwillingly driven away, to make place for the Cardinal's great house. The King's architect, Lemercier, was chosen as designer; Philippe de Champagne, as decorator; the master-pieces of Veronese, Leonardo da Vinci, and Andrea del Sarto were hung upon its walls. The theatre and the chapel rivalled each other in splendour, and, lo! when all was ready to receive its imperious master, an unexpected visitor entered with him at the door. After a series of splendid fêtes, given for the marriage of Richelieu's niece to the Duc d'Enghien, who was afterwards "Le Grand Condé," the all-powerful Cardinal must surrender to the summons of death. "Do you ask forgiveness of your enemies?" asked the priest, who had come to assist him in his last hour. "I have had none but those of France," answered the moribund. Even death could not humble the arrogant spirit of the man who had bent sovereigns and princes to his will, and who left the world as haughtily as he had lived in it.

Such a man as Richelieu could have none lesser than a king as heir, and to Louis XIII. the Palais Cardinal was bequeathed. He did not remain long to enjoy it, or his new-won freedom, and soon followed his master-servant to the tomb.

It was in troublous times of internal dissension that the young Louis XIV., a baby of five, came into his kingdom. We

know how nearly the throne was shaken to its foundations by the War of the Fronde; but Richelieu had left a shadow behind him, and France was to find, in Mazarin, another pilot by whose aid she was to weather the storm, another master to keep his iron-hand upon the rudder of State.

But in those opening, troubled, years of an infant's reign, the clouds gathered menacingly. The people had no confidence in the new Minister; mistrust was in the air, and the day came when the rulers of France began to tremble for their safety. Crowds surged backwards and forwards beneath the Queen's windows, and murmurs of discontent broke into an angry storm. Was it a revolt, or a revolution? Violence was written on the surly faces of the mob. At this critical moment, Anne of Austria, raised by the inspiration of motherhood and the courage of a queen, found strength that enabled her to dominate and quell rebellion. She appeared at the palace door, and, with a finger to her lips, beckoned the fierce crowds massed there to enter. Effacing herself, she pointed to a cradle, where, beneath the arms of France, a baby lay peacefully sleeping. Curiously and shyly, the rough men crept in, and bent over the rosy infant. All unconscious of his peril, he slept serenely, with a smile on his lips; and the rude breaths were bated, as the angry mob filed quietly and silently away, disarmed, conquered and submissive. They had seen the King of France, and not one of the most violent amongst them would do him hurt. Out of a horde of angry rebels, a woman's marvellous instinct had created an army of loyal subjects and the battle had been won by a child's unconscious smile.

Later, the sleeping baby grew into the most autocratic of kings, and Louis XIV. deserted, in favour of the Louvre, the Palais-Royal and its dangerous memories. The King's brother "Monsieur," with his fair English wife, Henrietta, daughter of Charles the First, came to reign there. A mysterious and cruel death overtook her in the flush of her beauty and youth, and "Monsieur" was left a widower, more absorbed in thoughts

of his mourning than sorrow for his wife. His one preoccupation in life was to adorn his foppish little body with finery; and for him no bright eye could ever rival in attraction the lustre of those jewels with which he loved to load his insignificant person. To him came presently, as wife, that rude, coarse, though witty and sound-minded, German Princess Palatine, who afterwards left, in her inexhaustible memoirs and letters, the most vivid and faithful picture of the strange Court of Versailles. During all these years, costly and innumerable "fêtes" waked the echoes of the Palais-Royal, and to its theatre, built by Richelieu with infinite care and luxury, to serve as a scene for his own mediocre dramatic productions, came Molière with his troop of comedians. The great dramatist had definitely won the King's favour, and he and his companions were put in indisputed possession of the first theatre in France. There installed, the poet, satirist, and humorist, excelled, as he had never done before, in painting living pictures of human passion, absurdity, and foible; giving to the Sovereign, who patronised him, a succession of some of the most admirable studies of Nature that have ever proceeded from any pen. The 4th of June, 1666, is a date to be remembered in the annals of French dramatic history, for it was on that evening that the "Misanthrope," the greatest child of Molière's splendid and fertile imagination, first saw the light. All Paris—intellectual, social, artistic—was gathered together in the audience, which comprised La Fontaine, Boileau, Racine, Corneille, La Rochefoucauld, Madame de Sevigné, Madame de Lafayette—a very roll-call of genius.

On the 10th of February, 1673, the first representation of the "Malade Imaginaire" was announced to be given at the Palais Royal. On the 17th, Molière, with grim heroism, prepared to act the part he filled in the play, which was that of "Argon," the sham physician, who must keep the public in a roar with scoffs against the pretended sufferings of the "Malade Imaginaire." As Molière, in the grotesque accoutrements of a

burlesque doctor, cried "Juro" in the Latin jargon of the quack, he reeled and, amid screams of laughter from a delighted pit, suddenly fell prostrate upon the boards. The audience rose to its feet, the echo of merriment still ringing through the house. The curtain fell, for the comedy was finished; and with it the drama of the poet's own successful, though unhappy, life. Dying, Molière was carried to his lodging overlooking the Palace Gardens. The next morning Paris heard with consternation that its favourite was no more.

The theatre, occupied through so many successful seasons by Molière's troupe, now fell into the hands of Lulli, and the reign of Comedy gave place to that of Opera. Through the King's brother, Monsieur, Duc d'Orléans, the Palais-Royal had become the property of the Orléans branch of the Bourbons, in whose possession it was to remain through centuries. The future Duc d'Orléans, Regent of France, had unfortunately fallen, when but a child, under the influence of his tutor, the Abbé Dubois, a man as corrupt and unprincipled as it was possible to find, even in the France of that day. Why such a person should have been chosen by Louis XIV. as instructor to the young Prince, it is hard to say; perhaps it is but another of the dark and mysterious pages, of which there are but too many in the records of the Royal House that governed France.

The young Philippe was talented, of a kindly nature, intelligent, and ardent; he might, under good influence, have developed into a useful and noble man. Had he done so, the fortunes of his country would have been far different, for it is certain that the iniquity and disorganisation of the Regency did not a little to precipitate the country into the Revolution of 1789.

With the Regency the Palais Royal once more awakened to days of importance. Louis XV. was but a pretty child at Versailles, and Philippe d'Orléans held the reins of Government in the name of the King. In that soul, so darkened by an unfortunate early training, there yet remained gleams of light, and possibilities for good. Un-

doubtedly posterity has been unjustly hard upon the Regent. He was not wanting in loyalty; he was intelligent and progressive in his ideas, artistic, and curious concerning all questions, scientific and otherwise.

The reverse side of the medal, however, seems to be that which was persistently turned to the public, who knew him from rumours which were too often true, and which stamped him as a debauché, and a libertine, and, indeed, accused him of impious researches and criminal manipulations.

It was an age of necromancy and dark practices, in which charlatans were rife. The Regent was supposed to hold black masses in the privacy of his apartments in the Palais Royal, and the fact that he would shut himself up for hours to make chemical researches, gave rise to a hundred strange tales. The retorts and lamps of his laboratory became instruments of the Foul Fiend himself, and he began to be looked upon askance by the credulous public as somewhat of a magician. In addition to this, tales of the Prince's private life scandalised both Court and town. The stories of the Regent's supper-parties, at which the wildest debaucheries were indulged in, horrified the people of Paris. The very vilest crimes were imputed to him. "Come and have supper with me," cried the Prince to his porter, one evening, as he passed him. "Your Royal Highness must excuse me; I do not care to sup in as bad company as Your Highness frequents," replied the old man. And the Prince laughed.

Yet, when he was not heavy with the fumes of the previous night's debauch, the Regent had a clear and comprehending brain, a tolerant and liberal spirit. He wished to return to the Protestants, who had been driven from France by the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, those privileges of which the later age bigotry of Louis XIV. had so unjustly deprived them.

The finances of the Kingdom were in a state of inextricable embarrassment. A Scotchman, John Law, proposed an audacious remedy, in the form of an appeal to the public credit. It was phantasmagoric, but also a vision of a future financial

system, of which the Regent, though not an able enough statesman thoroughly to execute the scheme, was clever enough to see the advantages. It was put on foot, however, with results disastrous to the public, whom it incited to feverish speculation. Blood was shed, and three corpses, brought there in the night, were laid before the Palais Royal, to greet the Regent's waking sight with their silent reproach. But no lesson could be salutary to a being who had allowed the lighter side of life to efface the graver, and lived, from hour to hour, in a whirl of thoughtless dissipation.

Upon the stage of this Comedy of Errors, which was the France of Philippe d'Orlean's time, a harlequin figure springs. It is that of Cartouche, King of Thieves and Charlatans. His allied forces were estimated at over a 1,000,000 men, and organised robbery was his trade. It became the order of the hour.

One of the fashions of that extravagant epoch was to carry a rapier, in whose hilt were set jewels, equal in value to a king's ransom. Such plunder was easily acquired, and unknown and adroit hands dared to gather rich harvests, even in the very ante-chamber of the Palais Royal. The Regent himself was victimised and, for once, his too indolent good nature was ruffled. By the following week he had set a new fashion, of rapier hilts cut in steel, so brilliant that they simulated the most glittering diamonds. This time it was Cartouche who was the dupe. The Regent's own sword was captured and brought to the thief, and behold! it was but a worthless bauble of steel. The Prince may have paid for it 1,500 francs, but it was worth less than 1,500 copper pennies to Cartouche. So, waking one morning, Philippe d'Orléans found laid upon his dressing table the stolen sword, its point run through a paper on which an anonymous hand had written: "Are you not ashamed so to steal from honest robbers, you who are the greatest thief in France!"

Yet, between his debauches and his schemes, the Chief of State—himself a painter of no mean merit—did not forget the

tribute he owed to art. The Collections, begun by Richelieu and dispersed by his successors into various palaces in France, were enriched by the Duc d'Orleans. Rumours of a Leda, hanging in the Pope's Gallery, inspired the first roué of Paris with a desire to possess it. But the Pope was obdurate and refused all the Regent's offers. "Does his Holiness wish to keep her for himself?" asked Philippe impertinently; and the insinuation won him the masterpiece.

In the midst of follies, and in the arms of his favourite, Philippe d'Orléans passed from the scenes of his revels, leaving France to her devices. His son, Louis the Pious, reigned in his stead; and so nymphs must disappear and Ledas be burnt at an autodafé. This reign of narrow bigotry soon faded from sight, and in 1752 Louis' son succeeded him as Duke.

On the night of the 6th of April, the public had hardly quitted the theatre of the Palais Royal before a curl of smoke and a puff of flame warned the inhabitants of Paris that the celebrated scene of Molière's triumphs was on fire. The only fire brigade the city possessed was the Order of the Capuchin Fathers who, at the sound of the first alarm bell, would be seen running to the rescue, their white robes tucked up round their waists. The fire at the Palais Royal rapidly grew beyond the Fathers' control. The young Duc de Chartres, soon to succeed his father, and be known later to history as "Philippe Egalité," appeared upon the blazing scene, offering advice and help, and directing a chain of lackeys, who passed buckets of water from hand to hand, to be poured upon the flames. The water was soon exhausted, but the Prince's ingenuity was not. A moment later all the wine of the Ducal cellars was being poured forth. Red wine of Burgundy, rich and velvety; rare vintages of Bordeaux, or sparkling champagne, flowed over the burning pile. Such a popping of corks and broaching of barrels had never been heard before in all France. Some of that joy-inspiring, ambrosial liquid found its way, not on to the scorched rafters, but into the scorched palates of the spectators, while

the mighty punch bowl—once a historic theatre—consumed itself slowly amidst consumers. The crowds gathered merrily around the supreme apotheosis of a stage which had already seen so many, when suddenly, upon a balcony, appeared the airy form of a dancer, gesticulating wildly amid wreaths of smoke. A young Abbé, stirred to desperate courage by the sight of beauty in distress, sprang into the burning furnace and disappeared, to reappear a moment after with the distraught fair one in his arms. Making his way along burning beams and falling masonry, he reached a place of comparative safety, with his burden unharmed. Ladders and a hundred willing hands did the rest. The crowds grew exuberant, cheered the hero to the echo, and declared that the rescued beauty must reward her saviour with a kiss, which she did, to the delight of the spectators, who vociferated "Bis, Bis!" as at a successful pantomime. Then, hand in hand, the Abbé and the dancer bowed their thanks and disappeared. Meanwhile, the cellar, so generously broached, had been emptied. Perhaps more than was good had found its way down the throats of the excited public; but the fire was stayed—though not before it had done its work of destruction—and the crowds dispersed merrily. So all things passed in the 18th century, to the tune of "After us the Flood!"

The theatre, soon reconstructed, served as the scene of Gluck's and Puccini's glorious artistic duels, and on the 8th of June, 1781, was finally and irrevocably burnt. Paris was faithful to the Opera, which it was beginning to love more than its kings. The young Queen, like most of her country-women, was an enthusiastic lover of music, but she did not love her cousin, Orléans, and at her instigation the new opera was removed to another quarter of Paris. Perhaps some obscure instinct warned Marie Antoinette of a future enemy in the man who was to become Philippe Egalité. The Duc d'Orléans was not for nothing the great-grandson of the Regent. He had inherited the latter's taste for pleasure, some of his intelligence and much of his

unscrupulousness. Like many of his race he affected to be in the van of advanced thought. France, at the end of the 18th century, was bitten by a fever of Anglomania. A man "à la mode" must drive his tilbury, import English jockeys to race in the Bois de Boulogne, and have an English mistress. That of the Duke was a certain Mrs. Elliot, who has left us, in her memoirs, a curious picture of the time.

With extravagant tastes, a desire to shine as a patron of the Arts, Literature, and Sciences, and an ever-diminishing rent-roll, the Duc d'Orléans looked about him for some means of increasing his revenues. Not much was to be hoped from the King. The family of the Palais Royal was not in favour with that of Versailles; there was small cousinly sentiment between the Bourbons and the Orléans. Beneath his very windows, Philippe discovered one day the solution to his embarrassments. He obtained, in 1784, the King's authorisation to carry into execution a project for transforming the gardens of the Palais Royal into a city of shops, restaurants, and places of amusements, all of which he might rent easily, at exorbitant prices.

"Now that you have become a shopkeeper, I suppose we may hope to see you only on Sundays," said Louis XVI. to his cousin, when the latter came to make his bow at Court. Having obtained what he wanted, d'Orléans smiled. Town and Court might criticise or cry out, but the mess of pottage came to a hungry appetite, and it was not in the eating of the dish that Esau remembered his lost heritage.

And so the new Palais Royal was born, prospered, and grew fat on its iniquity. Everything was to be bought there, from a shoe buckle to a philosophical treatise, from a trussed capon to a patched and powdered mistress, and everything was exorbitant in price and dubious in quality. How could it be otherwise, in an atmosphere of feverish dissipation and reckless extravagances, where all life was a gamble or a scandal, and thoughtless amusement the one occupation that reigned supreme? The

AT THE PALAIS ROYAL.

place was but a symbol of the Royal master who had built it, venal and corrupt to its very core.

A Secretary of the Duc d'Orléans, Choderlos de Laclos, has given us, in a book that remains celebrated, a picture of the manners of that time. In its pages we find the same strange and heartless cynicism that stamped the fine gentlemen and ladies of the closing years of the 18th century. Laclos, himself an honourable man and a devoted husband, imagined he would awake the Society around him to the dangers of the downward path it was treading. The book was written honestly for the moral it contained, and it is not one of the least indications of the spirit of the time that the moral passed unperceived. "Les Liaisons dangereuses" were reported to be stolen memoirs, and Laclos soon had a dozen duels on his hands, each one of his challengers believing himself to have been painted in the hero.

Meanwhile the tempest was gathering. The Tiers Etat had met, France had awakened to a realisation of the forces that had so long lain dormant within her. The Palais-Royal was the centre of the new movement, and the Duc d'Orléans himself, cousin of the King, headed the opposition. The bookstalls were full of pamphlets by Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Diderot; there was a return to simplicity, a simplicity more artificial than artifice itself. In Grenoble, Rennes, Versailles, the germ of Revolution had stirred: in the Palais Royal itself, it was to come to birth.

The movement must have its emblem. Camille Desmoulins, the fiery young Apostle of Liberty, mounts a chair and thunders at the idle crowds promenading the gardens; the very trees bend to listen to the strange, vibrating doctrines, which, until now, had been but cautiously whispered beneath their shade. Camille pulls a leaf from above his head and cries "Citizens, shall our rallying emblem be this?" and, a moment afterwards, a whirlwind of enthusiasm has denuded the branches, and the crowd surges back and forth, each man or woman decorated with a green leaf, the colour of hope!

Soon it will be the taking of the Bastille; and titles, dignities, honours shall be abolished! "Vive Philippe Egalité and his Palace! now no more Royal but of Equality." The Duc d'Orléans is the loudest to huzza. "Does the nation want money? It shall have my fortune"! Perhaps he hopes in that way to keep a portion of it. "Do they wish the King's head?" He will vote with the reddest Radicals that the King's head must go, cousin though he be. Even Robespierre is amazed at the cynical calculation of the "ci-devant" Prince. "The unfortunate man! He, at least, might have listened to the voice of human instinct," cries the deputy of Arras.

For a while the Revolution will play with Philippe as a cruel cat with a helpless mouse: sent first here, then there, liberated, reincarcerated, a prisoner in his own house. Finally, like a deadly paw, the steel of the guillotine shall strike off that too calculating head.

At least, in his last hour, Philippe Egalité became again the Duc d'Orléans, the inheritor of a line of Princes, and showed a touch of the dignity he had so basely renegated. At his trial, had he made the supreme sign of the Freemason, he would have found obligatory grace in those who condemned him. He was a chief of the Order and his judges were brothers. This at least he disdained to do, and when, by a culminating act of cruelty, the cart which bore him to execution was stopped in front of the Palais Royal, he raised his head, quietly and proudly, to look up at the windows of the palace from which he had so often cheered on the fierce mobs, who surrounded him in his last hour with derisive shouts of vengeance.

The Revolution did not desert its birthplace. Even though heads fall, appetites must be appeased, and those who may die to-morrow have all the more need to find to-day's sun bright. At no time was vice so fast and furious as during the Reign of Terror. The cafés of the Palais Royal buzzed with clients. There were cafés to suit all opinions—"La Rotonde," "La Ré-

gence—dear to Robespierre himself, the virtuous tribune. There was "The Café of a thousand columns," its thousand columns being but thirty, cleverly multiplied by reflecting glasses; the "Café du Mont St. Bernard," the greater part of which was taken up by a reproduction of the Mont; the "Café des Aveugles," with its orchestra of blind men, and a hundred more. On all the counters lay swords ready for the use of those fierce clients who patronised them. The Arcades were frequented by the class of society then known as "Nymphs," who, profiting by the general confusion of discipline, used to wear costumes borrowed from the antique, revealing forms that were often sadly wanting in antique perfection. The licence had become so great that the police finally intervened, to restore at least a semblance of decorum among the battalions of Venus, who had taken possession of the gardens, to the scandal of the neighbourhood.

Exorbitant play had been the popular passion for over two centuries in France, and the gaming houses of the Palais Royal were as varied as numerous. They ranged from the humblest and barest dens, where a penny could be staked on the roulette ball, to the most luxurious saloons, splendidly furnished, where thousands changed hands in a few hours. The whole was conducted with all the social etiquette and decorum of the old régime, and often presided over by a woman of rank, whom adverse circumstances had forced into earning her living by acting as the amphitrion of a gambling palace.

Amongst the most inveterate frequenters of the tables, at the end of the 18th century, was a certain Monsieur Auccane, who, before the Revolution, had been one of the richest planters of the Antilles. Ruined through the upheaval caused by the emancipation of the blacks, Monsieur Auccane left his abandoned sugar lands, preferring to pass his remaining years in the haunts of his youth, and amongst the friends of former times. One of the first visits he made was to the Comtesse de Sainte Amaranthe.

Madame de Sainte Amaranthe was no longer in the flush of a youth which had induced her to commit more than one folly. Married at 16—a first imprudence—to the Count de Sainte Amaranthe, who soon deserted her, she had lived for years on the borders of the society in which she was born, neither quite belonging to it nor absolutely excluded from it. A temperament that was none of the coolest had thrown her into the whirl of Paris gallantry, and, at the time Monsieur Auccane found her, she was living by somewhat precarious expedients, which her name, as well as two growing children, rendered it difficult for her to continue.

The sugar-planter hit upon a scheme to better all their fortunes, and soon overcame any lingering scruples the Comtesse de Sainte Amaranthe might have retained. The proprietors of one of the most elegant and richly patronised gambling houses in the Palais Royal had decided to retire. Monsieur Auccane was offered the succession, which he accepted; and it was the position of lady of the house, so to speak, that he proposed to his former friend. The tone of the establishment was most decorous. The Countess brought the manners of a refined and charming woman, and also something of infinitely greater value, namely, her daughter, then just budding into womanhood, of a rare and most complete loveliness of face and form. The prestige of the fashionable gambling-house was immense; admittance was accorded only to the regular patrons of the rooms. Its society was aristocratic, its tone subdued, its sympathies conservative. Its habitués were financiers or persons of solid position. Madame de Sainte Amaranthe might condescend to be the hostess of a gambling table; she remained, none the less, a gentlewoman by birth and predilection and with pretensions that had not diminished with her descent in life.

Whatever the faults or vices of her mother, Emilie de Sainte Amaranthe, at least, seems to have been a creature endowed with every attractive quality that a woman can possess. As

such, given her surroundings, she was doomed to be a victim.

Amongst the frequenters of No. 50 was the Comte de Tilly. Tilly has left behind him Memoirs, from which we may judge him at his own valuation. He had been a page of Marie Antoinette, had committed a hundred follies and indiscretions, posed as caring for nothing, was remarkably good looking, and had compromised half the women in Paris. That such a Lovelace should set out to conquer the sixteen-year-old daughter of the discredited keeper of a gambling house was but natural; that he should succeed was only too certain, and that he should soon tire of his passion for an ingénue, was the third in an obvious sequel of events. Madame de Sainte Amaranthe might weep and wring her hands, her beautiful daughter had but followed her own lead. The Countess stormed, and ordered Tilly to marry her daughter. Tilly laughed in her face. The girl, in reality but a child, was, fortunately, not so deeply touched as to be rendered miserable by Tilly's desertion; and, when he departed, as he soon did, on one of his numerous and mysterious voyages, after a period of tears and sighs, the even current of the days retook its course. It was not for long.

As women living on the border of the fashionable world, Madame de Sainte Amaranthe and her daughter were faithful patrons of the drama. The most popular actor of Paris, in 1790, was the singer Elleviou. Uniting the talent of an excellent comedian with a charming voice, and possessing a face of classic beauty, he became the centre of all eyes, the darling of the Parisian public; besides which, an incident made him, for a time, an idol of the Royalists.

The green room of the Opéra Comique was assiduously frequented by a great, hulking brute, Mazuel by name, a rabid terrorist in principles and practice. Staggering in one night, half drunk, Mazuel walked up to a group and began vociferating his opinions. Turning to a noted Royalist who was standing near him, he cried rudely: "We are your masters, and, if it please us, we will take your houses, drink your wine, caress your

women, and cut off your heads." As the last words left his lips, Elleviou, who was listening, seized the brute by the collar, and, dragging him to where a fire was blazing in the grate, would have thrown him headlong into it, had not the crowd interfered. It was not likely that Mazuel would forget the insult, and Elleviou's friends advised him to leave Paris for a while. This he refused to do, sending his seconds to Mazuel, who replied by a prudent silence. The affair was dropped, and the handsome tenor was so popular with the public that the Revolutionary Tribunal left him quiet. One evening, as he was singing, Elleviou's eyes were suddenly arrested and irresistibly attracted by that mysterious affinity which sometimes seizes and concentrates two glances across a crowded room. The actor saw a singularly beautiful, distinguished girl, leaning silently from a box near the stage. As his eyes met hers, she blushed and drew back; but the magnetic message had been sent and had done its work in both young hearts.

It was not difficult for Elleviou to obtain an introduction to Mademoiselle de Sainte Amaranthe. He became a frequent visitor at the gambling house in the Palais Royal. The lovers —for they were that from the first time their eyes met—were soon living in a paradise of their own, indifferent to all that surrounded them. Madame de Sainte Amaranthe, absorbed in her intrigues, and alarmed by the turn affairs were taking in Paris, where the Revolution was beginning to rage, and the most menacing rumours were circulating, left the lovers undisturbed. She was awakened to the situation through a letter sent by Elleviou's former mistress, and she at once decided to remove her daughter from a danger only realised when it was too late. There was one solution which Madame de Sainte Amaranthe favoured, because it was the easiest, and that was a marriage with the Vicomte de Sartine, who was a suitor for her daughter's hand. Emilie resisted stubbornly. To marry one man, loving another, was a miserable alternative; but the angry mother was determined, and the girl's tears and pleadings only

rendered the Countess more obdurate. It was exile to Rouen, or marriage: no other choice was offered. To leave Paris was more than her courage was equal to, and the unhappy girl married Sartine, for no other reason than that she adored Elleviou.

On the 9th of August, 1792, Madame de Sainte Amaranthe was at the gambling house in the Palais-Royal when, about midnight, a letter was slipped into her hand. It was from Tilly, then in Paris. He begged her to leave France the next day with her daughter, and offered to accompany them to England, where he himself had decided to retire until the storm blew over. Madame de Sainte Amaranthe, however, was unwilling to leave the country, believing that, even should the situation become more serious for the Royalists, as a woman, with a young son not yet of age, she would remain unmolested. She consented, nevertheless, to quit Paris for a country seat which she possessed near by, where, accordingly, the Countess, her daughter Mme. de Sartine, her son Louis, and M. Auccane were soon installed. The following weeks passed quietly, the little circle settling down with relief to the peaceful country life. The days passed in visits to the sick of the village or walks in the park, varied by occasional calls from friends bringing news of the terrible events that were succeeding each other rapidly during the Summer and Autumn of 1792.

The luckless marriage, so hastily and recklessly entered into, had not been a happy one for Emilie de Sainte Amaranthe. As she had never loved Sartine, daily life with him grew irksome, and the young couple inevitably drifted from misunderstanding into a hopeless incompatability. To Elleviou, Emilie had given all that was in her nature to bestow; she loved him with an absorbing and devoted passion that left no room in her heart for any other sentiment, or place in her mind for any other thought.

There was a small door at one end of the park wall and through this Elleviou would pass, coming secretly, at nightfall,

whenever his profession left him free to absent himself from Paris. Perhaps the very difficulties and dangers of these stolen meetings made them more doubly precious to the lovers. Elleviou would wait for the signal—a light, placed in the tower in which Emilie lodged—then, trembling with emotion, he regained the room above, where his mistress awaited him in all the abandonment of her divine loveliness—for love, given and requited, had changed the fair girl of a year before into a rarely beautiful woman. The hours passed like charmed minutes to the two young lovers. When over the horizon, beyond which lay Paris, dawned the first morning light, Elleviou would tear himself from his mistress' arms, each feeling that these moments might be their last togther.

The idyll was soon to end. Denounced by an unknown enemy, the little community was awakened one night by the visit of a party of "gendarmes," with an order for the arrest of the entire Sainte Amaranthe family, known as Royalists and implicated in a plot to assassinate Robespierre. The house was searched, and though no compromising papers were found, one of the soldiers discovered two miniatures of a boy of nine and a girl of fourteen. They were those of Madame Sainte Amaranthe's son and daughter, taken in their childhood, but it served the purpose of the Commissioner, who pronounced the portraits to be pictures of the Royal children, and the party was immediately ordered to accompany the "gendarmes" to Paris.

The fact that there was no real evidence against Mme. de Sainte Amaranthe counted for little. She was known as being one of the proprietors of the gambling house in the Palais Royal, reputed as a hot-bed of Royalist intrigue. A fact that weighed heavily against the unfortunate woman was the secret visits of Elleviou, who had always come muffled, and at night. Unsuspected by the Château itself, these mysterious apparitions had been observed and noted in the village, and had been reported to the Revolutionary Committee as suspicious. It was

found out afterwards that Clotilde Malfleuroy, the dancer, had denounced the Sainte Amaranthes, as an act of vengeance against her former lover. Whatever the cause, the whole family was sent to Paris and incarcerated at Ste. Pelagie, with a bevy of prisoners, all supposed to be implicated in the plot against Robespierre. After a summary pretext of trial, the Revolutionary Tribunal decided that "La Sainte Amaranthe, her son Louis, her son-in-law the Count de Sartine, and his wife, were to suffer the pain of capital punishment" along with some fifty others, taken from all classes of society, accused of having conspired against France. The condemned were "to be driven to the guillotine dressed in the red garment of the regicide, that their punishment might serve as a lesson to the population."

The unfortunate Countess, distraught with grief, heard the verdict pronounced amid a passion of indignant protests and tears. Emilie was perfectly calm and smiling, and it was she who sustained and comforted the miserable mother, as the carts drew up to carry the condemned to the scaffold. Of all the prisoners that were taken from the Conciergerie to execution, perhaps none more unjustly condemned ever passed through the crowded streets than that convoy of the 17th of June.

All the environs of the Palace of Justice were thronged with eager spectators. There were the "tape dur," the most savage element of the population, dressed in their "carmagnoles." From under the fox-tails of their bonnets shone their greasy, animal faces, hot and bestial with the lust of blood. There were the shrill-voiced fish-women, who revelled in their horrible name of "lécheuses de Guillotine," and—to their shame be it said—there were also fair and delicate women, lightly and gaily dressed in muslin and ribbons, or mothers who raised their unconscious infants in the air to see the "procession" as it passed. Here and there in the crowd was the pale set face of some friend or parent, come to take a last silent farewell of the loved one. The orange merchants circulated, hawking

their wares, with lists of the condemned, while the brilliant sun of a dazzling June day streamed down upon the compact crowds. There was a buzz of expectation and then a sudden hush, as the carts, packed to their full-holding capacity, came slowly forth. In one of them the Comtesse de Sainte Amaranthe, with haggard features and eyes swollen with weeping, leaned heavily against her daughter and the young Louis, both children encircling her tenderly. From Emilie there radiated a beauty so divine that a murmur of admiration ran even through that heartless mob as she traversed it. The luminous whiteness of her skin shone like a cloud in the vivid scarlet of her mortuary dress, her fair hair, which she had begged the jailor, as a last favour, to preserve—"for someone who might call to take it after her death"—had been cut from about her neck. It fell around her perfect face, giving her an aspect of child-like candour, though all a woman's awakened soul looked from her blue eyes into the sky above.

"We are like a procession of cardinals," she said with a smile, as she turned to her husband, who was standing near her in the cart. She gave him her hand, which he bent to kiss, with a delicacy of comprehension that, had it come sooner, might have altered both their destinies. Suddenly she grew pale, for, amongst the seething populace, her eyes met those of Clotilde Malfleuroy, who, with strange vindictiveness, had come to watch how her rival met her death. With a quiet look of scorn, Emilie turned away.

Other carts followed, with others as young and innocent, and even the mob began to show some pity. Voices were heard calling "For shame! one does not execute children!" For a second it seemed as though the public were growing restless, and an effort might be made to save the prisoners. The carts stopped, their drivers hesitating, but the implacable Henriot was on the watch and, spurring his horse forward, he hastened on the drivers, and the precious moment passed. Oblivious of the protestations of the bystanders, Emile de Sainte Amaranthe

stood holding her fainting mother with one arm, her eyes scanning the upturned faces, as if lost in a reverie. Amongst them she was searching for one. At last, the heavy tumbrels, jolting through the Faubourg St. Antoine, arrived at the foot of the scaffold, and then she saw him. Fighting his way desperately amongst the throngs which separated them—pale, his dress disordered, haggard through sleepless nights of anxiety—Elleviou vainly tried to reach the fatal carts. He had not failed at the supreme moment. Emilie read in the distraught and horror-struck eyes all the adoration of her lover. A serene smile, her last good-bye, lighted her face with radiant joy, and the lips which Elleviou had so often kissed with passionate devotion parted in a mute farewell. As they had first met in a long, long eloquent look of confession across a sea of faces, so they parted. The crowds closed and hid them from sight for ever. A moment afterwards Emilie de Sainte Amaranthe's severed head was held up by the public executioner to the gaze of the waiting crowds. It was beautiful even in death!

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The violence of the drama is too great to last, and the Revolution soon ends. In the galleries of the Palais Royal "Sans Culottes" and "Tricoteuses" make way for "muscadins" and "Incroyables." A sallow, Corsican Lieutenant of Artillery, in a shabby uniform, will walk there dreamily, envying the flaunting vice which passes him by, unsuspecting that Napoleon lurks waiting in Buonaparte.

The soldiers of the Consulat, the Generals of the Directory, the Marshals of the Empire will drink their glass of rattafia in the cafés of the Palais Royal.

To the Palais Royal the son of "Egalité" shall return, and from it he goes to the Louvre, as King of the French, in place of his cousin, the deposed Charles X. of France. Republics spring up from the stones of barricades, dynasties

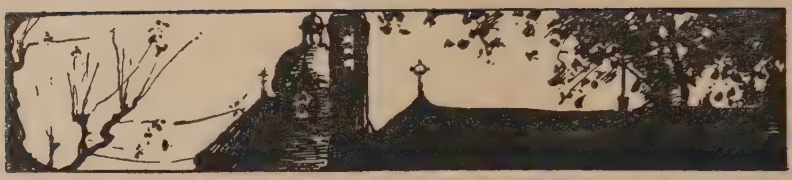
change; while, gradually, one by one, as from a sinking ship, its patrons leave the Palais Royal.

Let us leave it, also, to its echoes, its memories, its sunny days, and its faithful lovers, for, neither in decadence, nor in age, has it been wholly deserted.

Under the galleries where Revolutions blew their fiery breath, quiet students now come to take a peaceful mid-day stroll, or poets to seek the inspiration which the things of the past mysteriously impart to the children of the present. In the chequered shade of the light trees, beneath which arrogant vice once flaunted, there are but the rosy smiles of babies, sleeping in the sunshine.

Peace to the Palais Royal! Let those who would pronounce its doom but enter its quiet portals—they will come away disarmed, persuaded of the utility of useless things. Though its past has been tempestuous, its present is the peaceful evening of a calm winter day, and, of all the shadows of vanishing Paris, it is perhaps the most sunlit.

CHEST BELONGING TO CARDINAL RICHELIEU.



THE TOWERS OF LES CARMES.

CHAPTER II

THE CONVENT OF "LES CARMES"

It remains unchanged, intact, this scene of one of the most sanguinary dramas of the Revolution. The sombre old building is peopled with tragic phantoms, and still bears, upon its walls, the impress of the red hands of Cain.

The convent of "Les Carmes" was founded in 1613, and one year later Marie de Medicis laid the corner-stone of its Church. Occupied to-day by the "Institut Catholique," it lies enclosed behind its high walls, bulwarks jealously guarding its sacred traditions. To enter it is to lift the veil of a buried past, to awaken terrible memories that are now chastened by time, and fast fading in the light of over a hundred seasons. But, where the tempests of human passion have raged, something intangible always remains—a sense of concentration, a startled suspense, hanging like a mist in the atmosphere, holding us captive, and filling us with vague, breathless awe. Yet, in this quiet church, in this melancholy and beautiful garden, dwells an infinite peace. The sunlight of an autumn day filters lightly down through the tall trees; upon the translucid surface of the fountain, languid water-lilies hold unruffled the drops of morning dew; the harsh sounds of the City steal but faintly through the veils of silence, with which the old place seems hung; while, like a benediction from above, the golden leaves fall softly, softly.

During the opening months of the Revolution, those priests who had been unwilling to take the oath of allegiance—and they

CONVENT OF "LES CARMES."

were the great majority—were arrested by hundreds, to be incarcerated in the prisons, from which debtors and felons had been liberated to make place for them. But prisons, as well as private houses of detention and correction, became rapidly congested with occupants, and the Revolutionary Committees of the different sections determined, therefore, to utilise for that purpose the churches and convents, recently confiscated and closed. The Convent of the Carmes, with its chapel, cells and vast garden, in the Rue de Vaugirard and, consequently, almost in the heart of Paris, was admirably suited for the lodgment of prisoners; and in August, 1792, over 150 priests were congregated in the church building. Nearly every night the prisoners were disturbed by the shouts and brutal voices of the jailors, ushering in a new bevy of victims. Their food was of the meanest, and scant indulgence was allowed them. Still, the poor band of fathers deemed themselves not unfortunate to be at least confined in a church, and waited patiently through the hot August days for the development of events, and for their liberation, which, given the circumstances of their absolute innocence, they felt must be speedy. Their request to be allowed to hold Mass was summarily denied, the only resource which remained was mutual confession, and permission to read their breviaries which, fortunately, had not been confiscated.

Notwithstanding their discomfort and privations, the prisoners were remarkably cheerful, even though ugly rumours reached them, through the latest comers, of the state of ferment and agitation that reigned in Paris. All authority had become tyranny, and the reins of Government were gradually falling into the hands of the most violent and dangerous party in the Convention. So the time passed, until one day, at the end of August, when the doors of the church were unexpectedly thrown open, and a Commissioner, in a tri-coloured scarf, entered briskly, and called out the prisoners' names in turn, asking each if he were a priest or merely a member of some sacred Order. Two of the prisoners were released, not having as yet

taken orders, while a retired officer was reincarcerated, on the ground simply that he professed the Roman Catholic faith. There was small sense of logic or justice in the breasts of the Commissioners of the Revolutionary Tribunal! A few days after, the priests received the visit of another deputy, who confiscated the scissors and knives they carried about their persons, but declared that they would soon be at liberty. On the 30th of August they were told that a Prussian army was menacing the frontier, that the population of Paris had risen "en masse" to send volunteers to fight the invaders, and that the priests themselves were to be deported, a few hours being allowed to each in which to make his final arrangements before leaving France.

The following morning, the unfortunate men began their hasty preparations, some of them receiving visits from relatives or friends, who had hurried, bringing with them what money they could collect, to bid the priests good-bye. The fathers awaited the morrow calmly, and with a happy confidence in the mercy of Providence, hardly warranted by the increasing tumult in the prison, the sounds of hurrying footsteps, rapid orders and a general sensation of menace in the surrounding atmosphere. Over the convent wall, into the peaceful garden, came the hoarse cries of excited mobs, the clank of muskets, as patrols scoured the neighbouring streets, and the regular boom of a distant alarm cannon.

At two o'clock, on the 2nd of September, a Commissioner of the Section appeared precipitately, and summoned the prisoners to roll call in the garden. They filed unsuspiciously and passively down the narrow passage and out into the garden, bathed in clear, autumn sunlight. Two rows of citizens—in the red Phrygian bonnets affected by the "Patriots of the Commune," armed with pikes, and commanded by a petty officer in uniform—were drawn up on either side of the little stone porch. A volley of coarse abuse and ribald jokes greeted the priests as they appeared. Astonished, and beginning, at last, to feel some apprehension, they retired to the further end of the garden, where

ENTRANCE AT WHICH THE PRIESTS WERE MASSACRED.

a small oratory then stood. Some of them entered, and, kneeling at the altar, began the prayer of Vespers. As the chant rose skyward, a yell of rage greeted it, and eight young ruffians, armed with pistols, and brandishing swords, rushed wildly down the alley. The first prisoner they encountered was M. de Salins who, unheeding the pandemonium that had begun to reign, was quietly reading his breviary by the fountain in the centre of the garden. Before he could lift his eyes from the book on which they were bent, his skull was beaten in by a powerful sword stroke from behind, while, at the same time, a dozen pikes entered his back. It was the signal: and the slaughter began! The unfortunate victims, surprised, unarmed, and absolutely defenceless, were hacked down like sheep in the shambles. In every alley, gasping on the grass, or groaning in their death struggles, they lay; while some staggered about blind with blood and pain, stumbling against the trees, their maimed limbs hanging useless, their heads opened, their faces gashed, horrible and heartrending to see; for their murderers denied them even the mercy of finishing their tortures, and left them, weltering in the blood of mortal wounds, to die as best they might.

At one end of the garden, surrounded by a terror-stricken group, yet untouched, stood a venerable prelate, his scanty white locks falling upon his black robe. The ruffians spied him out, and cries of "The Archbishop of Arles, the Archbishop of Arles" rent the air. Clear as a bell in a temple, the priest's voice rose above the horrid tumult.

"Let us thank Almighty God that He has called upon us to seal with our blood the faith we profess." He raised his hand in absolution, and turned to kneel at the little altar. A band of devoted priests surrounded him, but he pushed them gently away.

"Let them come to me," he called; "perchance my blood may appease them." And with his hands crossed, his eyes elevated to heaven in a last prayer, he advanced calmly.

"I am he that you are seeking," he said gently. "Then it is

you, the enemy of the Patriots of Arles," they shouted; "the old villain!" And they came menacingly towards him, brandishing their pikes.

"You are mistaken," said the priest with dignity; "I have never wronged, nor done a hurt to any living man."

"Then I shall do it to you," laughed a coarse brute, and, with one swoop of his sabre, opened the Archbishop's brow to the skull. He tottered forward, without a murmur, his hand shading his eyes from the blood that was pouring down his face in torrents. As he fell, a second ruffian stabbed him in the back, while a third planted his pike with such violence in the old man's breast that it remained immovably caught there. A few priests, the sole survivors of the slaughter, crowded into a corner, awaiting death; but the commanding officer ordered them to retire to the church, which they did, falling at the foot of the altar, while one amongst the number repeated the words of supreme absolution. They were soon ordered back again to the garden, the assassins striking them down as they passed along the passage and out at the doorway, until not one remained.

A few, a very few, succeeded in climbing the high wall and escaping in the general confusion, and it was through these survivors that the tale was told in after years, as well as by "some idle spectators." The massacre began in the afternoon; and evening fell on the old garden, strewn with stiffening corpses, and dark pools that made gruesome patterns on the grass, its sedate walks trampled in the agony of death-struggles; while muskets and sabres, and severed human limbs, littered the down-trodden turf. The little oratory was piled high with contorted corpses, fallen one upon the other, and along the corridors marks of bloody hands stained the walls in all directions. Meanwhile, the perpetrators of the tragedy had gone to the wine-shops to drink off the fumes of carnage, daring to show themselves in their soiled and blood-sodden clothes, and even to boast of the numbers of their victims. There were hundreds of stark

bodies lying, that night of the 2nd of September, unvigiled and uncovered, in the heart of Paris; for it was not only at the "Carmes," but in a dozen places, that scenes so brutal, so revolting, and inhuman, were being enacted. A holocaust of sixteen hundred and fourteen victims was offered upon the altar of liberty—presage of the work soon to follow. Strange to say, the murderers were not paid assassins; no bandits or mercenaries; but volunteers from the population, most of them citizens of some standing—artisans, workmen, or small shopkeepers.

It was only eighty years afterwards that the bones of the victims, slaughtered at the "Carmes" on the 2nd of September, were excavated from the trenches in the garden where they had lain, since their hasty burial, piled pell-mell. They were piously gathered together, and ranged, along with other relics, in the basement of the Church, where they now lie and where we see them, each with its fatal scar defacing the poor skull; on one a sabre cut, on another a crushing blow, on a third a thrust from a pike. As the garrulous guardian, with his smoking lantern lifted to light our way, precedes us, we pass with relief from the grim catacombs into the warm, sunlit garden of another September evening, so different, so peace-laden, that we cannot imagine these serene old walls, these noble trees, as witnesses of such hours of horror! Around us, on every side, from the ground once soaked in the blood of the bodies whose whitening bones we have just left, spring a hundred tender blossoms of "fleur de lys," as though those poor souls yonder, who died for the ancient faith of aristocratic France, had sent their spirits back to bear witness to their steadfastness in that creed of which the little flowers were once the badge.

Fortunately, sanguinary and tragic memories are not the only ones attached to the ancient convent. There are also those of three remarkable gentlewomen, who left something of their grace and charm as a legacy to the crumbling walls. In a small room overlooking the garden, Josephine de Beauharnais—

CONVENT OF LES CARMES.

SUN DIAL, BESIDE WHICH MONSEIGNEUR D'ARLES WAS MURDERED.

then but recently a widow—and Thérèse Cabarrus, the future Madame Tallien, were detained, in 1793, through weary days of uncertainty. What must have been the frantic anxiety, and the mortal ennui of these two women, both young, both beautiful, and full of an ardent taste for life, condemned to pass the hours in useless speculation upon a future as uncertain as it was menacing. The room in which they were confined was scarcely large enough to contain them. It was bare of the meanest necessities and must have seemed oppressively cramped to the young Southerner, and to the luxurious Creole, accustomed to the vast, cool plantation houses of Martinique, surrounded with jasmine-scented gardens, and tropical palm-tree shade. The two women passed hours leaning against the heavy, iron bars of the casement, looking drearily out at the fatal garden which still bore marks of the tragedy of September. When they turned, shuddering at the memories it evoked, their eyes fell upon the wall of their cell, where, in one corner, the stained wainscot showed the dark marks of the stack of dripping swords laid there on the night of the massacre a year before. A hundred fears and anxieties must have assailed them by turn. Both were essentially feminine, both desired ardently to live and love, and both turned to the horizon beyond their prison walls, to scrutinise its possibilities and hopes of salvation. There was one supreme chance which both realised and determined to use. In Royalists, Republicans, or Terrorists—by whatever name they might describe themselves—human passions, desires, and appetites, remained eternally unchanged. The two prisoners had already tested their powers upon the opposite sex. They felt that, in their defenceless beauty, they possessed the sharpest weapon of attack, and neither hesitated to use it. To both were reserved surprising destinies, to both the purple and the crowns of life, and some of its thorns. Yet, perhaps, neither attained the calm and placid happiness of another fair noblewoman, who is associated with the walls which she saved from destruction, under which she lies buried, and where most of her busy and

eventful years were spent in unceasing activity and devotion.

On the 24th of July, 1784, Camille, daughter of Charles Joachim de Seiglières de Belleforières, Comte de Soyecourt, and de Tuppigny, Marquis de Guerbigny, etc., etc., assembled her friends and noble relatives to witness the final ceremony of her taking of the veil. The Order she entered was the severest and most formal in the Catholic faith; its portals once passed, she bid good-bye to the world as utterly as though she had entered her sealed coffin. It was by her own free desire that Mlle. de Soyecourt had chosen to immure her name, youth, and beauty under the veil of a Carmelite. Her parents and relations had opposed the sacrifice, until it became impossible longer to resist her will. It was an imperative vocation.

The Church in the Rue de Grenelle could scarcely contain the throngs of distinguished and fashionably dressed spectators that crowded to it on that July day, whispering and buzzing with curiosity as eager as that with which they would attend some famous dramatic representation. Suddenly, the organ pealed forth, and necks were craned and glasses levelled, as the young girl, attired as if for a Court Ball, with panniers and laces, roses holding the wealth of her light hair in an elaborate coiffure, slowly ascended the aisle and kneeled at the altar where Monseigneur de Juigné, Archbishop of Paris, stood surrounded by the clergy of the diocese. The two witnesses of the bride of Heaven, for as such the Roman Church considers those who lay down their future life and will at its altar, were the Marquis de Feuquières and the "President Molé." The Marquis de Soyecourt, prostrated with grief, had been unable to attend the ceremony.

As the frail girl, pale with emotion, beneath the rouge she wore, rose from her knees at the closing words of the final benediction, the spectators filed from the church into the open air, where surmises and comments ran riot. The busy gossips marvelled at the strange decision of one, who, endowed with every gift of fortune, should have chosen voluntarily a destiny

of penitence, privation, and seclusion, which they did not credit her with strength of character, or health, to resist for even six months. They little guessed the iron resolution, the untiring zeal of spirit that dwelt in the delicate frame of Camille de Soyecourt. Thus she disappeared from the lives of those who knew and loved her.

Lost to the world's voices, in the secluded convent of the Rue de Grenelle, the Carmelite sisters were to be rudely awakened. On the 2nd of September, 1792, Matins had just been chanted, and at the very hour when the gardens of Les Carmes and the courtyard of L'Abbaye near by were running red with devoted blood, the Sister Camille saw, from the window of her convent cell, five men, who, after vaulting the wall, glided amongst the bushes and tried to enter the convent. The alarm was given, and the Sisters slept that night dressed and ready for flight; for terrifying rumours came to them from without, and they prepared to meet the worst. A week after, the Commissaries of the Commune forced open the doors and penetrated into the secluded sanctuary. A crowd of idlers followed, curious to see the sacred and mysterious precincts, which, according to popular fiction, were gorged with unwilling victims. What was the disappointment of the mob to discover only some score or so of nuns, many of them old and feeble. They were pronounced "at liberty," and ordered to disperse; and the unfortunate women, grown timid through long immurement from the world, turned, sadly and fearfully, to leave the walls which, for so many years, had given them the peace they had come there to seek. Passing through the groups that surrounded the entrance, they halted like a flock of frightened deer on the threshold of the noisy, cruel city beyond, and then, quietly, with mutual and tender farewells, disappeared into the night.

What they and many others of their order and profession then endured, would fill an odyssey. Meanwhile the Sister Camille, with a few companions, wandered into the streets of

Paris, which they no longer remembered, and finally found a refuge in a house in the Rue Mouffetard. There, for some time, they remained tranquil, offering hospitality and hiding to those priests, who, in every variety of disguise, continued to practice their religion in the very heart of the terror-stricken town. But, denounced by some unknown enemy, on the morning of Good Friday, 1793, the devotions of the poor nuns were disturbed by loud knocks, and thirty members of the "Section," armed with pikes, invaded their sanctuary. The house was full of compromising documents, which were discovered, and the sisters were arrested.

Camille was sent to Ste. Pelagie, where her indomitable energy soon organised a group of "the faithful," who, prisoners like herself, yet managed to meet daily to recite together the offices of their missals. There they were even visited by a disguised priest, l'Abbé de Lalande, who heard their confessions and gave them absolution. Employed by a wine-merchant as messenger, he penetrated the prisons, passed the turnkeys, and, under the unsuspecting noses of the very jailers themselves, pursued his sacred calling. Liberated again, Sister Camille, finding herself alone, homeless, and penniless, returned to the Hotel de Soyecourt, where her parents, after many years, could press the lost one in their fond arms once more. But it was not to be for long. In 1794, the Marquis de Soyecourt, as well as his two elder daughters, the Countess d'Hinnisdal and Madame de La Tour, were arrested and confined in the convent of Les Carmes, converted into a revolutionary prison. Madame de Soyecourt was taken to Ste. Pelagie, and Camille was left alone in the vast hotel. She fled from it at once, carrying with her the only riches she possessed at the time, a paltry piece of silver, soon spent. She lived then as best she might, roaming like an outlaw, to find a night's shelter under some deserted roof; rising with the morning light to seek what scanty nourishment she might live on, subject to the coarse insults or worse advances that her delicate and unprotected beauty

inspired. Sometimes, driven by the cravings of starvation, she would glide unperceived back to the empty Hotel de Soyecourt, and, from the larder of the caretaker who had been placed there, she would filch an egg, which she hastily swallowed, raw, to appease her hunger.

One day she heard the death of her mother, and, on another, the condemnation of her father, cried aloud from the revolutionary list that was hawked through the streets. That of her sister, Madame d'Hinnisdal, followed, and Camille sought the little orphan niece and brought her to share her humble lodgings in a farm outside Paris; for, nobles and ci-devants had been forbidden residence in the Capital. Mademoiselle de Soyecourt had found a temporary asylum in a village on the outskirts of the city. But this, too, she was soon forced to abandon, the farmers fearing to keep beneath their roof a former aristocrat; and her distress and misery became even greater than before. So, from hardship to hardship, she passed with a charmed life, through the fearful months and dangers of the Reign of Terror. At last, it was over. Paris, shaken and reeling from its drunken orgie of vengeance, righted itself slowly. The 9th of "Thermidor" had come, and Camille de Soyecourt was free to re-enter Paris. She soon found an abandoned chapel, and, undaunted, set to work at once to reorganise the scattered Order of the Carmelites, which the Revolution had blown to the four winds of heaven. To be able to reintegrate Paris, to be no longer pursued like a hunted animal, above all, to hear daily mass, was relative happiness after the years that had passed. The Revolution had strewn havoc on every side around the "Sœur Camille." It had taken her father and mother, her sister, and dozens of those who had been dear to her. But the Carmelite lays down the things of this world on the first step of the altar upon which she takes her vows, and her mystic faith endows her in return, with a spirit of renunciation, only equalled by that of the Buddhist.

Meanwhile, the splendid fortune of the Comte de Soyecourt

had been confiscated by the Convention, and Camille had remained claimant of vast sums. Requiring nothing for herself, her ambition for her Order was inordinate, and she determined to recover the millions that, lying idle in the offices of the Treasury, would enable her to reconstruct and gather into one fold the disbanded flock of the Carmelite Sisters. Her course of action once settled, she was not long in putting her plan into execution, and the tones of her gentle voice soon grew to be a well-known sound in the anti-chambers, audience halls, or cabinets of state-ministers. It was no easy task to which "Sœur Camille" had devoted herself; yet she might have accomplished one ten times more difficult, for, beneath that frail and delicate exterior beat a heart as resolute, a will as absolute, as those of a Cæsar. So a day came when clerks and notaries gathered together, to deliver over hundreds of thousands, in property and securities, to the heiress of the Comte de Soyecourt, who had come into her own again.

When, as the door opened, a tall, thin, frail woman, with a pale, placid face, dressed poorly and shabbily in a worn, black frock, and white bonnet, entered, and, bowing with quiet grace, announced herself as Camille de Soyecourt, the astonished clerks could scarce credit their eyes. Could this, indeed, be the inheritress of lands and thousands? The gentlewoman received her possessions with a radiant smile, that induced the men of law to say, when she had gone, that, notwithstanding her faded dress, and air of genteel poverty, she was one to whom the possession of broad acres and fat farms would bring no mean satisfaction. How little they knew the quiet woman who was re-threading her way, unobserved, along the crowded streets of Paris, now again grown familiar to the recluse of the years before '92.

The heart of Camille was indeed ringing with a carol of joy, though little thought of self entered it. That very day she sent out an appeal to the dispersed members of the congregation to rally to the house she had bought as an

asylum for their Order. Soon the little band grew and swelled. From every point of France, from Europe, even from America, the black sisters, many of them worn out with misery, joyfully gathered to re-enter the devoted routine of their daily life, so roughly broken into on the 12th of September, 1792.

Meanwhile, in the busy brain of "Sœur Camille," another dear project, now realisable, had long germinated. In her many comings and goings through Paris, she had often passed before the ancient convent from which her father had been led forth to the scaffold, and where so many of her faith had suffered and died.

The Terror over, the "Carmes," no longer needed as a prison, had quickly fallen into disuse. The locality had at length attracted a contractor for public balls, while the cloister served as storehouse for a wood merchant's stock. Mademoiselle de Soyecourt entered into negotiations, bought the church buildings and gardens, and had soon installed an army of workmen to restore them. The masons were given strict orders to leave untouched, as a sacred memory, the traces which the blood of the victims of September had left upon the walls.

On the 24th of August, 1797, the "Sœur Camille," at the head of her companions, took formal possession of Les Carmes. So the convent gates closed again, for a time, upon Camille de Soyecourt. For a few years, she pursued her humble and devoted existence within the hard-won retirement of the Sanctuary. Yet it seemed that she could never wrest from Fate that oblivion she had longed for. In 1811, "la Sœur Camille" was denounced as a violent royalist, and ordered by the Imperial Government to cross the frontier. Even Napoleon was afraid of the delicate woman, whose inflexible will nothing seemed able to break. Mademoiselle de Soyecourt was not one to be daunted by threats or menaces, and what was exile to the intrepid spirit, who would make the tiresome journey from Belgium once a week, passing

the frontier in one of the numerous disguises which the days of terror had made her such an adept at assuming, simply to visit her dear community? Half the journey would be undertaken on foot, and the courageous Carmelite would pass unsuspected under the eyes of the Imperial police, attired in a peasant's cotton frock, sometimes, even, affecting lameness, or bending her delicate straight shoulders into a hump.

The Restoration put an end to her exile and its precarious expedients, and the faithful soul seemed, at last, to be upon the eve of those days of peaceful realisation, so fully merited, when an unexpected blow came from that very Church of which she had been so devoted a servant. The diocese decided that the convent of Les Carmes would admirably suit the purpose of an ecclesiastical college.

Mother Camille hesitated long before making this last, supreme sacrifice. To abandon the old walls, which she had saved from destruction, and to which she was tenderly attached by a hundred terrible and pious memories, was hard indeed, even for the unselfish heart of a Carmelite; but the Church's demands were also commands, and Camille de Soyecourt was of that stuff of which martyrs are made. So the Carmelite sisters were transferred to a deserted convent of the Bernardines, in the Rue Vaugirard, which Mademoiselle de Soyecourt acquired for her little flock. It is there that she passed the last years of her long and eventful life. She had become so wasted by privations and abstinence that her frail body seemed transparent. At over eighty years of age she lay upon an uncovered plank couch, where sleep itself refused to find her, tortured as she was by constant and violent attacks of gout, which twisted her maimed limbs.

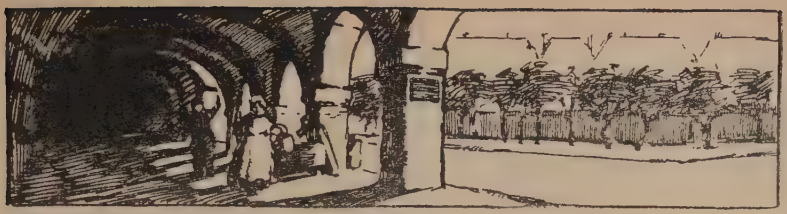
When, in the morning, the sisters would knock at Mother Camille's door to ask news, they would find her seated on the straw, pale and pain-worn, after a sleepless night, but with a bright smile on her lips, uncomplaining, and cheerful. She loved to talk of the past, was interested in the present,

and solicitous for the future of her community. She would sing gaily some verses of her own composition, or excuse herself by saying, "My poor children, I'm not in voice to-day, for I nearly passed away last night." Yet she would not spare herself a day's fasting, living only on a little milk, for she was unable to eat, and suffered cruelly from the heart disease which, when she was eighteen, had made the fashionable and brilliant crowds exclaim, on the day she donned the veil, that surely the poor child would not be able to stand for six months the life she had chosen.

Finally, in 1849, having survived all the members of her family, having lived through the Terror, three revolutions, three dynasties, and half-a-dozen Governments, having seen the old order change, and the new succeed it, Camille de Soyecourt was received into that peace of God she had so often prayed to enter. Her body, dressed in the robes of the order she loved, was laid behind an iron grill. The public of Paris crowded to see the mortal remains of the woman. who was known and reverenced far and wide, by rich and poor, as "La Mére Camille."

She lies buried in the crypt of the old convent of "Les Carmes" which she saved, amid the stones bearing the names of those heroic priests massacred on the 2nd of September, and the perfume of her sunlit and benign spirit lingers in the tragic and beautiful garden, where she must so often have walked, meditating humbly on the mutability of all human things.

RELICS KEPT IN THE CHAPEL OF THE MASSACRE OF THE PRIESTS.



THE ARCADES, PLACE DES VOSGES.

CHAPTER III

PLACE DES VOSGES

We leave the bustle of traffic, the whirr of motors, all the busy, twentieth century life of the Rue St. Antoine, turn into the quiet Rue de Birague, pass beneath an ancient archway; and three centuries drop behind us as we step into the Place des Vosges. The sunshine falls in broad patches of light on the quadrangle of old brick houses; unchanging, they lie, asleep, and forgotten in the midst of change. A hundred paces away, the great city's deep voice roars unceasingly: yet here all is silent, with a pathetic silence of abandoned things that gives to the June day a strange feeling of suspense.

Moss grows upon the pavements over which court chariots once rumbled, and where courtiers came and went in brilliant silks and laces, there are now but a thousand twittering sparrows, dusting their shabby, brown coats in the sunshine. The red facade of the high houses has lost its lustre, the face sunken like that of a spent beauty, the features awry, the cheeks pallid under their faded rouge. There is something awe-inspiring and dreadful in old houses.

It was in 1635 that Pierre Corneille sang the charms of the celebrated Place Royale, yet its history dates far back in the annals of Paris. On this site Charles V. built the Château des Tournelles and planted a spacious park with gardens, in which he might come to seek relief from the restraint of court etiquette. During the English occupation of Paris, in the time of Charles VII., the Duke of Bedford, Regent for the King of England,

made his headquarters at the Château des Tournelles, stocking the gardens with aviaries of exotic birds, which it amused him to watch and feed. Louis XI. and François I. lodged there at different times, and on the first of June, 1559, all France was convoked to a gorgeous tourney, given by Henri II. in the park. The King himself was to break a lance, in honour of chivalry, with his captain of the Scots Guards, the doughty Montgomery. The Queen, the nobles, and ladies of the Court, sumptuously attired, were present, seated, tier above tier, in the splendidly-decorated pavilion. Henri, wearing the colours of his mistress, Diane de Poitiers, rode into the lists, mounted on a magnificent charger; the trumpets sounded, and, at that signal, the knights charged. Diane, now at the summit of her triumphant career, flushed with pride as she watched her lover anxiously. Suddenly she rose with a wild shriek, as she distinguished, in the cloud of dust that hid the combatants from view, one of the knights sway in his saddle, and fall heavily to earth. It was the King! The Scot's lance, piercing the royal helmet, had passed through the eye, and penetrated the brain. Amidst the wildest dismay and confusion, Henri was carried from the field, mortally wounded, to linger ten days, and die in fearful agony.

After the King's death, his widow, Catherine of Medicis, demolished the unlucky château, and persuaded her son to sell the park, which was soon after given over to the town to serve as a public horse mart. The abandoned grounds became the scene of more than one bloody duel, or treacherous assassination, and fell into evil repute.

It was here that occurred the duel of the "Mignons," in which Quelus, the King's favourite, received a mortal wound from Balzac d'Entragues, the seconds, Maugiron and young Shonberg, both being killed on the spot. The King's grief at the death of Quelus, upon whom he had showered riches and honours, knew no bounds, while the good people of Paris,

PLACE DES VOSGES.

rejoicing to be delivered from what they termed one of the Royal leeches, sang gaily and disrespectfully,

"To the devil with vengeance,
Gone the foul weed of Florence,
That would ruin our fair France."

With the reign of Henry of Navarre came a change of dynasty, and a happier and fairer rule than that of the dark house of Valois. By order of the King, his architect, Claude de Châtillon, designed the plans for a future square, to be built on the site of the Park des Tournelles, which King Henry desired to make the centre of a luxurious modern quarter of the town, not only serving for residences occupied by the nobility, but also for industrial purposes, thus bringing all classes together. From the square which was to be called la Place Royale, avenues and streets were to diverge, each bearing the name of a province. The work was begun, the sovereign coming daily to watch the progress of a scheme in which he was deeply interested. Unfortunately, a thrust from Ravaillac's knife ended one of the wisest and most politic reigns France has ever known. After the King's death, the noble enterprise progressed but slowly, and it was years later that the brilliant new place was completed and officially inaugurated, with much pomp, by the young King, Louis XIII. As it was then, so we may look upon it to-day, and save for the few insignificant changes which time has wrought, it remains absolutely the same uniform graceful quadrangle of red brick houses, with stone facings and high mansarded roofs, from which it is not hard to evoke the life that once thronged the gardens, loitered before the gay shop windows, and strolled beneath the shady arcades. All the men and women of fashion of the time of Louis XIII. and Louis XIV. have moved about the "Place," as it was then familiarly called.

On such a Spring afternoon as this, it would have been thronged with a motley crowd: fine ladies, resplendent nobles, sturdy chair bearers, street criers with nasal voices, hawking

the latest libellous pamphlet, the last Court bulletin or rhyming satire; neat-footed soubrettes, tripping on milady's mysterious errands, sleek, red-heeled Abbés, fresh from Court, or grim Jesuit fathers, back from distant missions; Swiss guards, Scotch guards, and musketeers; all these and a thousand more have passed in the procession, and marched away, through time, to the land of shadows and memories. Here Richelieu schemed, Ninon de Lenclos loved, the Prince de Talmont, Mlle. du Châtelet, Rohan-Chabot and scores of others intrigued; here one of the most delightful and graceful of French writers, Marie de Rabutin Chantal, Marquise de Sevigné, was born, in the year 1626. We may imagine stout Bussy-Rabutin hurrying to give her the last bit of Court gossip, we can see her eyes full of sadness as she listens, though her arch lips smile, for she has been watching her handsome, fickle husband openly paying his court to Ninon, or, perhaps, to the beautiful Madame de Gondron, a rich bourgeoise of the "Marais," for whose bright eyes he committed a hundred indiscretions, ending with a duel, which cost him his life. His young widow mourned him sincerely, even though they had been separated soon after their ill-assorted union, by the Marquis' follies, open neglect, and debauchery. "He esteems me without loving me, I love him without esteeming him," she answered to a friend who asked the cause of their estrangement. Love him, she certainly did, remaining faithful to his memory all her life. Even the great King's smiles left her whole-hearted. She deplored her virtue with quaint humility, and apologised for a "temperament which found all its expression in the love of her children." There is something infinitely charming, natural, and touching about this amiable and witty woman. Pure amidst rampant vice, although she passed her life at Court, and surrounded by courtiers, she made no enemies, and even the breath of scandal passed her by untouched.

Diagonally opposite to the Marquise de Sevigné's birthplace, lived the celebrated courtesan, Marion Delorme. If

grim Bussy had been minded to stop to pay her homage, he would have found her seated in a resplendent dressing gown, her feet plunged in a tub of boiling water, by which she hoped to reduce to aristocratic paleness a nose inclined to be red. With red nose or white, however, Mademoiselle Delorme had no lack of admirers. She accepted no presents of money or jewels, though her lovers had her gracious permission to shower on her laces, silks or velvets. She had a passion for clothes, and never wore the same dress twice; so that, at her death, she left enough finery to keep her impecunious family in funds for years. She was generous and munificent, and never forgave the Great Cardinal Richelieu for offering her sixty pistoles as a compensation for her favours. She fell ill finally, from an overdose of antimony, a dangerous drug she was in the habit of taking, and sent for the "curé" of St. Gervais hard by. To him she confessed herself ten times in three days, quite exhausting the good priest's patience by the frequence with which she begged him to return to hear some overlooked detail of her past life of pleasure. At last, her confession ended, she died, and was pompously laid out on her bed with a virgin's crown of blossoms upon her brow, all the gentry and men of fashion escorting her, on foot, to her burial.

Here, on the pillars of the arcades at No. 21, were posted Richelieu's bills prohibiting the constant duels which were decimating the upper class. During the opening years of the seventeenth century, eight thousand letters of grace were delivered to noblemen who had killed their adversaries, not always in the most scrupulous way.

The Duc de Guise and young Coligny, quarrelling over the Duchesse de Longueville's bright eyes, challenged one another, met, and fought in the Place Royale, and on the day after the edict against duelling was issued, François de Montmorency, Comte de Boutteville, and the Comte de Beuvron, with their seconds, drove up in their coaches to La Place Royale, at three o'clock of the afternoon. The combatants threw off their

GATEWAY OF THE PLACE DES VOSGES

coats, saluted ceremoniously, and all six fell into position, almost under the Cardinal's very windows. Ten minutes after, three out of the six were lying mortally wounded. Montmorency and Beuvron remained unhurt, but were arrested, tried, and executed, by Richelieu's orders, a week later in the Place de Gréve. Montmorency, though but twenty-four years old, had been principal in eighteen duels, in which he had had the singular address, says one of the chroniclers of the time, to kill but two men! The duel, as well as the execution, was witnessed by admiring crowds.

As we review the manners and customs of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, we are amazed at the publicity in which the lives of the people of "quality" were passed. At all moments their important, or unimportant, acts were witnessed by an audience. Even the King of France, from the minute his eyes opened to the light, was held up to a gaping public that crowded into the royal bedchamber, and, until the moment of his death, he never remained alone for a second. The courtiers, who imitated him, moulded their lives upon the etiquette of the Louvre or of Versailles, and had their "levers" or "couchers," with lesser sycophants and satellites surrounding them. Great ladies received their priests or admirers during the hours of their toilette, and were combed, patched and painted before a room full of gossiping visitors. What wonder if, in the negligé of the dressing-room, jests were free, allusions direct, and feminine reserve and delicacy abandoned. It was scarce worth while to blush under a layer of rouge, which was considered as necessary a compliment to dress as a bodice, and remained blooming on the cheeks of women of quality until long afterward, at the end of the eighteenth century, Rousseau brought nature into fashion.

The thundering cannon of the Bastille woke the echoes of the deserted old square, and sent its last aristocratic inhabitants flying, like a flock of frightened pigeons, across the sea, to escape Fouquier Tinville's terrible, inquisitionary lists. The

place was given over to the savage Sans-Culottes, who baptised it "Place de l'Indivisibilité," and came to have their cutlasses sharpened, or their fire-locks renewed, at an armourer's, who had remained sole survivor of the prosperous shopkeepers of former times.

Strange to say, the revolution left unmolested this Cradle of a Society it hated and pursued, with such implacable relentlessness. The "Place" became one of the eight recruiting offices of the capital, when, at the call to arms, young and old, weak or strong, came forward to offer their lives in defending France from the enemies who were pressing across her frontiers. Certainly few countries can boast of a nobler national movement than the magnificent "appel à la Patrie," spontaneously answered by the enthusiasm of a whole people, from which grew in a few short years the young Army of the Republic that, with Bounaparte at its head, was to restore the nation to more than her ancient prestige, and crown her adventurous sons with the laurels of a hundred victories.

The Restoration of 1815 gave back its ancient name to the Place Royale; but its glory had departed, never to return. The tenants of the elegant shops had long migrated; most of the houses were closed, or to let. A few artists, men of letters or bohemians, attracted by the cheapness and tranquility of "La Place des Vosges"—as it was soon called—came to live in the abandoned square. We may stand under the window from which Victor Hugo and Théophile Gauthier would lean, to call out a neighbourly good morning, or to begin an interminable discussion on art or literature, with only the robins as auditors.

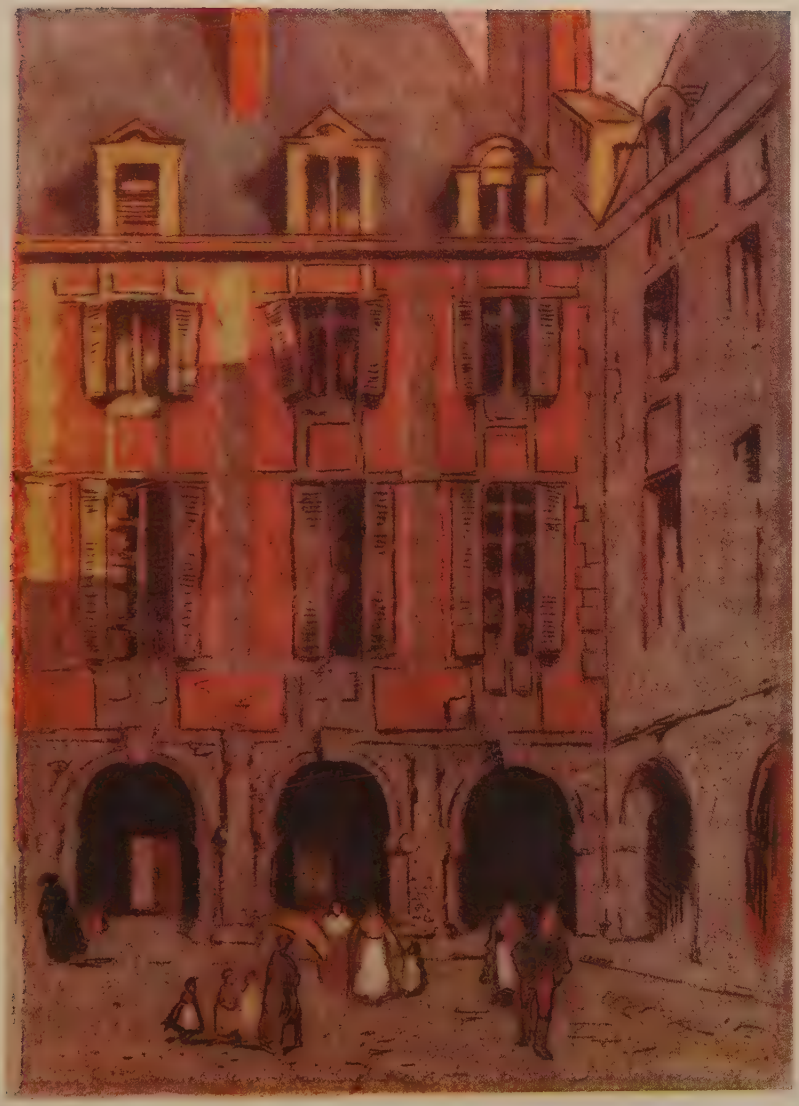
To No. 9, in the house once inhabited by the Duke de Chaulnes, Mademoiselle Rachel's coffin was brought from Cannes, one bleak January morning in 1858; around it crowded statesmen, poets, actors, the hundreds who had applauded her in her triumphs and forgotten her in her declining health and fortunes. "This will be a good room to be buried from," she had said sadly, with a strange presentiment, looking round the vastly

proportioned salon, when, a few months before her death, she chose her new apartment. Yet, spacious as the salon was, it could scarce hold the crowds that flocked to look, for the last time, upon the pale, classic features of the wonderful Phèdre, the matchless tragédienne, who died at thirty-nine years of age, broken-hearted by the fickleness of a public who had once adored her, only to discard her for newer favourites, at the time when she most craved sympathy and help.

Each quarter of Paris, old or new, has its distinctive personality. The present inhabitants of the Place des Vosges are a queer, moth-eaten crew: small shopkeepers, who purvey the cheapest necessities of life; Jews, of whom there is a colony and a Ghetto close at hand, who pass you with side-long, suspicious glances as they shuffle by, unkempt, long-haired, and greasy; little old ladies in dressing gowns, with their hair pinned in curlers, who seem to spend the week sitting gossiping in the sunshine by the fountain. One wonders whom the embryonic curls are meant to captivate, when Sunday comes.

One of these approaches us, and, with quite the grand air, says patronisingly, "This place is of historic interest: over there lived the Baronne de Sévigné." We wonder why she has degraded the Marquise in the scale of dignities, but are silent, and she continues: "A lady, who wrote a great many letters, very celebrated, *very* celebrated"; and the strange little person makes us a bow, with such an antiquated and patronising grace that, half mad though she be, we thank her humbly for the information, and watch her shuffle off in her slippers, through the dusty gravel, full of the importance of her erudition. The Parisian public has a fixed, irradicable idea that the Anglo-Saxon stranger is an ignorant brute, to be treated with a certain contemptuous tolerance, as an objectionable, though in reality, harmless individual.

But the antiquated lady has interrupted our reveries, and brought us back to consciousness of the present, and a sense of the passing hours. One side of the rosy square is caught in



HOUSE OF THÉOPHILE GAUTIER. PLACE DES VOSGES.

FACING PAGE 50.

a long, creeping shadow, the scattered occupants of the garden are all gone, save a group of ragged children playing in one corner and a sad-faced priest, who passes with echoing footsteps, under the abandoned arcades. Louis XIII., immovable on his stone horse, rides stiffly on his motionless parade through the centuries, petrified like the place which bore his name, in the centre of moving life and arrogant change.

The time will come, and soon enough probably, when progress will take an implacable revenge upon the old houses that have so long defied it, standing, this mellow afternoon, placidly basking in the sunlight of another Spring. Inanimate, as well as animate, things have their span of life, and, Pyramids of Egypt, or house of shingle, must equally disappear from off the face of the earth. Vanitas vanitatum!

As we turn to go, courtiers, ladies, poets, and paupers, the great and the humble, fade from our sight, and dissolve into thin air.

The shadows are gathering; let us leave "la Place des Vosges" to its memories. Overhead, the fleecy clouds are already touched with the amber light of evening, and the June day has drawn gently to its close, while we lingered, lost in reverie.

XVII CENT. BALCONY IN THE RUE ST. ANTOINE.

CHAPTER IV

SAINT GERVAIS AND SCARRON'S MARRIAGE

The church of St. Gervais was constructed successively in 1212, 1420, and 1581, on the foundations of a church of the sixth century. Before its porch, from time immemorial, had stood a giant elm, which served as a tribunal, under which justice was rendered between contending parties. When the tree died from excessive age, its memory was perpetuated in the houses built along the Rue St. Antoine (now Rue François Miron) where, in every one of the old 18th century balconies, we may see an elm interlaced in the pattern of the iron rail.

St. Gervais was the church nearest the Place Royale, and, in consequence, the fashionable place of worship, when the Marais and the "Place" were the favourite residences of court and town. To St. Gervais the Marquise de Sévigné would trip for her confession, from her house close by, in the Rue Culture Ste. Catherine (now de Sévigné). It was from here also that Mademoiselle Marion Delorme was buried, and that Bossuet made one of his greatest funeral orations, over the tomb of the Chancellor Le Tellier. The church was almost destroyed during the Revolution, but the stout stone pillars of the 13th century blunted so many tools that the effort to saw them in two was given up, and the old church transformed into a Temple of Youth. Philippe de Champaigne, who decorated one of its chapels, lies

IMPASSE ST. GERVAIS

FACING PAGE 52.

buried in St. Gervais, as well as Crebillon, and the poet Scarron. The little chapel, painted by Philippe de Champaigne, is associated with Scarron's strange marriage.

Most students of French literature have read some one or other of the burlesque plays written by the farcical philosopher poet. Under all the tone of levity and jollity, there runs the current of deep melancholy, something pitiful and pathetic, that makes the writings possible to re-read now, and saves the flippant style from being classed as mere vulgar banality. Indeed, all poor Scarron's joy was put into his writings; his life was more of a tragedy than a comedy.

Paul Scarron came of a respectable Parisian family of magistrates. His youth was passed amid that solid bourgeoisie that did so much to build up industrial France. His mother died early, and the Councillor, his father, soon re-married. The young Paul lived at ease, however, under the paternal roof. He thought of entering the church, and had gone so far as to don the jaunty cape of one of those abbés of the 17th century, who never took regular orders, but considered themselves free to indulge in all the pleasures of the world, as well as to enjoy all the privileges of the Church. There were hosts of these dainty little abbés in the 17th and 18th centuries. Like flocks of twittering sparrows, they flew about among society, soliciting in Ducal ante-rooms, gossiping beside great ladies' toilette tables, love making, intriguing, and, above all, enjoying the crumbs that fell from the tables of the great. Such a one was our poet. But, suddenly, an unexpected blow shattered Scarron's career. His father, the Councillor, died. The widow proved herself to be a typical step-mother, for not only was Paul turned out of house and home, but he soon found himself engaged in a ruinous lawsuit to regain his heritage. His two sisters were dependent upon him. Scarron, who had constituted himself protector of these donzels in distress, found them as unsatisfactory as exacting. "What can I do with them?" he cried. "One loves men, and the other wine."

In addition to his worries, Scarron fell ill. He had the misfortune to consult one of the quacks who passed as sorcerers and were so popular with the public. This one seems to have been particularly ignorant, for he gave Scarron a medicine that was to make him an invalid for life. His legs began to shrivel, his backbone to curve. The poor devil found himself unable to move, pinned to his sofa in dreadful pain, doomed to a death in life, and yet without the material means of existence. It was from this combination of unfortunate circumstances that the Scarron we know was born. His ready wit suggested the only possible way of gaining a livelihood. Whatever the incapacity of his limbs, his pen at least was an agile one. To the poor cripple, to rhyme was as easy as—in fact easier than—to breathe. He poured forth satires, burlesques, plays. Even his letters of petition—of which there are not a few—are in verse. In the Marais, near the Place des Vosges which he loved with the passion that, in other circumstances, he might have given to a mistress, Scarron found a lodging suited to his narrow means. He gives us his own portrait:

"Un pauvret
Très maigret
Au col tors
Dont le corps
Tout tordu
Tout bossu
Suranné
Décharné
Fut réduit
Jour et nuit
A souffrir
Sans guérir
Des tourments
Véhéments."

Thus we find Scarron beginning his career of jester. He laughed at everything, even at his own sad state. For does not

joy console? But, indeed, poor Scarron's joy had a bitter ring. During all the twenty-two years that were to follow, he set to work systematically to amuse his public. He reminds one of that picture of the clown standing in the motley clothes of the ring, beside his dying child, with tears running down the painted, grinning face. To be tied to an invalid's chair, to be tortured with racking pains, to see the limbs, once strong and well, wither into the helpless, sawdust legs of a broken doll, and yet to have the courage to set the world a-laughing, and to laugh with it—surely this is a valiant nature and a stout heart! It was a tender heart, too, whose sufferings had made it keenly alive to those of others. Thanks to his inexhaustible pen, the poet eked out a living for himself and his two harpy sisters. His friends had obtained for him a small pension, on the strange ground and title of "Queen's invalid." His love of irony, however, cost him his place, for he was unable to restrain turning Mazarin into ridicule, and the Queen was as sensitive for her lover as the Cardinal was himself vindictive to those who dared to laugh at him. So that little resource was soon withdrawn, with the title and pension attached to it, leaving the poet as impecunious as before. It was with many a lamentation that Scarron found himself forced to seek a cheaper quarter than the Marais. Every time he went out of la Place Royale he would bid his beloved square a respectful and tender farewell; and to move across the river was a heartache. But needs must, and, in the Rue des Saints Pères, he found cheaper lodgings.

In the same house as the poet there lived a certain old Baroness de Neuillant who had constituted herself guardian and protectress of a young girl of noble family, penniless, and an orphan. Françoise d'Aubigny was a mere child of fifteen, but her experience in misfortune had rendered her thoughtful beyond years. The future Marquise de Maintenon had been born in the prison of Niort, where the blood of her Huguenot brothers had baptised her in adversity. Her parents fled to America to escape the religious persecution that their Protestant creed had

brought upon them. The little Françoise, then a baby in arms, was rendered so ill by the privations and cold of a stormy voyage in a rough sailing ship, that all life apparently left the frail body. At the moment when the lifeless baby was about to be consigned to the sea, the Baron d'Aubigny thought he saw signs of animation in the tiny face, and, after the last prayers for the dead had been repeated over their daughter, her delighted parents were able to see the little Françoise struggle back to life.

Her existence, from the cradle, was destined to be a sequence of romantic and astonishing events. After a series of adventures and misfortunes, the child found herself, at the end of her fourteenth year, an orphan, and dependent on the bounty of Madame de Neuillant, who, actuated by a charitable caprice, had adopted her and gave her luke-warm affection and protection. Scarron, whose restless imagination had always been fired with the idea of the adventurous life of the Colonies in the New World, begged his acquaintance to bring the little stranger to pay him a visit. According to his desire, the old Baroness brought her protegée one day to see the invalid. He could not rise, and the young girl walked timidly to his chair, hardly daring to advance within the lighted circle of Scarron's lamp. The poet had to ask his pretty visitor to stoop where he might see her face, and greeted her so kindly that she was soon encouraged to speak of her experiences, made confident by the sympathy of the gentle, suffering eyes that met hers as she looked up at her strange host's pain-worn face. When they parted, it was with a promise that Mademoiselle d'Aubigny would return soon. Scarron had been charmed by her grace and intelligence, while the girl, on her side, was won by the poet's kindly nature, which had at once put her at ease, and made her feel that she had gained a friend.

Many a day would find her beside the invalid's chair; he delighted in her stories of the solitudes and privations of the wild new world, and the weary blasé man of civilisation

found an unending pleasure in listening to the frank, simple prattle of the unsophisticated girl of fifteen. So the two became great friends. When Francoise recounted the history of her birth and the vicissitudes of her precarious childhood, tears choked her utterance. The tender heart of Scarron was moved at the tale of misfortune, and he took the girl's hand in his own. "Surely Mademoiselle," he cried, "to have come back from such perils means that fate reserves you for a great destiny." From the past the strangely-assorted pair of friends would turn to the future. It offered but cheerless prospects to Mademoiselle d'Aubigny. Her protectress made the poor child pay dearly enough, in humiliations, for the scanty bounty she received. Scarron listened with a sympathetic ear to all these doleful confidences. He, whose sole remaining pleasures in life were a good fire and a good dinner, groaned over the hardships Françoise was made to endure by the miserly Baroness.

He determined to put an end to the girl's privations and trials, and announced to her one day that he would put away a sum of a thousand ducats, amounting to a third of his fortune, to serve as a dower for Mademoiselle d'Aubigny. The girl listened, overcome with gratitude, but when Scarron remarked that it was a "dot" for her entry into a convent, he thought that he saw a rapid expression of consternation pass across the pretty face. Evidently the idea was repugnant to one just entering into the promise of womanhood. Scarron passed in review all the young men he knew; not one of them would have married the penniless girl. There was no one but himself he could count on, and he was old and infirm. So much the better: he could be a father and protector to the waif. And when Mademoiselle d'Aubigny arrived later for her daily visit he broached the subject. "Mademoiselle," he began, "I can no longer give you a dower." He saw the girl's face fall and her eyes fill with tears. "But stop," he said quickly, "I can no longer allow you a dower, for I am going to marry you myself." The proposition was as unexpected as the suitor was strange,

and Françoise demanded a night's reflection. The next day, however, she came to see her friend, and put her hand in that of the crippled poet. Before many days Scarron, then forty-one, and Françoise d'Aubigny, but sixteen, were married in the little side chapel of Saint Gervais, decorated by Philippe de Champaigne.

The queer bridegroom and his child-wife moved to a house in the Rue de la Tixeranderie, where they took a modest apartment on the second story. Here Scarron's friends, great and small, would come to find him, each one bringing his own dinner to swell the scanty menu. "All these great nobles come to see me," writes Scarron, "as they would go to look at the elephant, because they have nothing to do for the moment." Françoise rarely appeared at these feasts, where the tone, which was somewhat free, and the jokes, which were not a little crude, frightened the shy girl. But gradually her influence refined Scarron's liberty of language. And high or low, great or small, treated the dignified young wife with the greatest respect. Sometimes, when the feast was particularly meagre, Madame Scarron would come to table to cover with her wit and charm, the deficiencies of the bill of fare. Scarron's broad hospitality welcomed all those who came to him, from the Cardinal de Retz, to a neighbouring mason, whose good sense and astrological knowledge pleased the writer. One day, the astrologer mason drew Madame Scarron's horoscope, assuring her that he saw her a future Queen. "A Queen if you like," laughed Scarron, "provided the King has crutches as a sceptre, and an invalid's chair as a throne." But, perhaps, the poet's superstitious mind was more impressed than he acknowledged, for, in his will, he bequeathed to his widow full permission to re-marry. True, he could hardly have done otherwise, for he was but a protector and a father to the woman whom he had generously married, to save her from a worse fate.

Scarron lived six years after his marriage, his suffering growing more and more insupportable. Sleep refused to visit

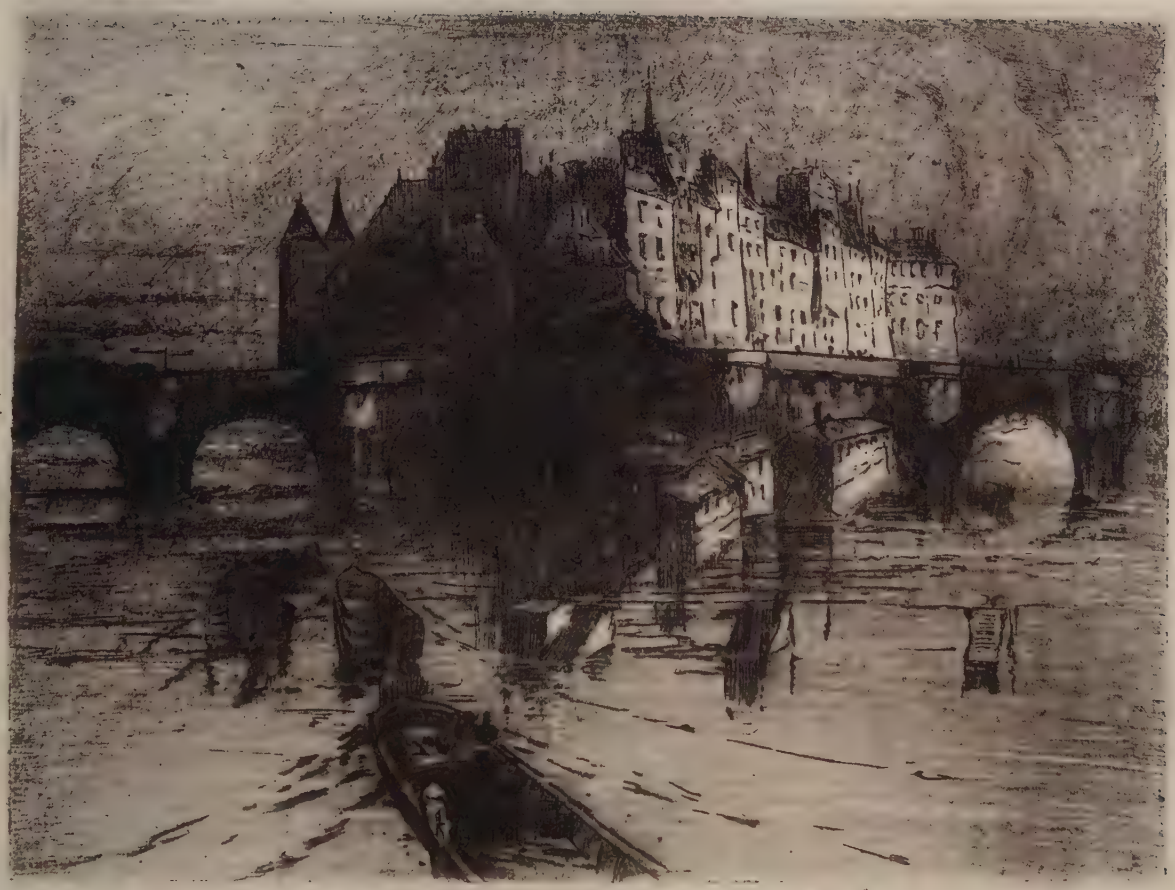
his uneasy pillow, and death was never more earnestly longed for than by the unfortunate man. Finally, during the early autumn of 1666, the restless spirit was at last freed from the imprisonment of its helpless, pain-racked body. On the day of his funeral the creditors seized Scarron's belongings. His young widow found herself left alone again, and almost penniless. To Madame de Maintenon's credit, be it said, that she mourned her husband with real sincerity, and always, even in her after-life of grandeur, treated Scarron's memory with veneration. All the world knows the extraordinary career of Françoise d'Aubigny; how after a few years of privation, she became the governess of the Marquise de Montespan's children; how her intimacy with Louis XIV., beginning by a violent dislike on the King's part, ended in his absolute subjugation; how, first entrusted with the Royal bastards, she gradually gained ascendancy on the King's mind, until, lawfully, though privately, married to Louis XIV., she, the daughter of the exiled Huguenot, the widow of poor Scarron, became Queen of France, in all but the title. But it is not the Marquise de Maintenon's surprising career that we would recall here. She is displeasing enough later, in her great days, when she reduced the King of France to a narrow bigot, and turned the Court of Versailles into a hive of scheming priests. We would evoke her as she stood before the little altar of the chapel of St. Gervais, her hand clasped in the distorted fingers of the strange, crippled bridegroom, whose disinterested solicitude led him to offer to the abandoned orphan the only thing poor Scarron possessed—his name.

And, as we turn the pages of one of his out-of-date volumes of verse, we read, with more indulgence, the laboured wit, and forgive the libertine jest, or the scandalous sally, as we see, lying bleeding, far beneath that frothy surface, the tender, gallant heart of a true gentleman. Scarron's twisted, long-suffering bones are buried at St. Gervais; and there is no epitaph so fitting for the buffoon poet as those charming verses

of his own, through which wails all the pathos of Scarron's gaiety:

"Celuy, qui cy maintenant dort,
Fist plus de pitié que d'envie
Et souffrit, mille fois la mort
Avant que de perdre la vie.
Passants, ne faites aucun bruit,
Et gardez bien qu'il ne s'éveille;
Car voicy la première nuit
Que le pauvre Scarron sommeille."

ST. GERVAIS. XVI. CENTURY CARVING.



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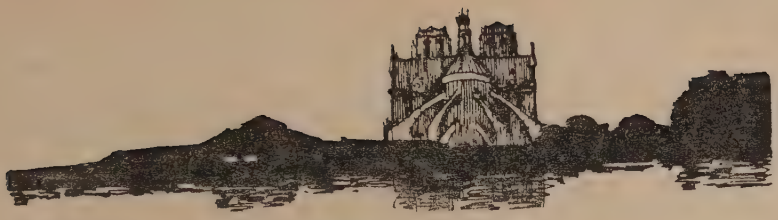


NOTRE DAME AND THE MORGUE.

CHAPTER V

THE SEINE AND ITS ISLAND "LA CITE"

Rivers have a dual personality, and, to those who look below the surface, an ever-varying interest and a mysterious charm

Of all rivers, the Seine is essentially one of moods and moments. It flows a stream of arterial blood, through the very heart of Paris, and, all around it, restlessly, ceaselessly, pulsates the life of the great city. Broad, painted barges drift in unending processions down the breezy current, and rapid "bateaux mouches" dart nervously across the green waters, whose sunlit serenity expresses an exuberant vitality.

But, as the twilight deepens, a change creeps subtly over the face of the waters, and with night the soul of the river awakens. Then the current seems to gather power, and to move more rapidly; then the tall, narrow houses draw closer together, and cast murky shadows into the depths beneath; under the dark spans of the old bridges, glassy pools evoke gruesome thoughts of drowned women, while the lights of gliding boats fall, like wriggling fiery serpents, to die in the purple tide. It is then that the restless spirits of the unsatisfied river beckon with sinister meaning; and, like a sombre, glittering snake, the lapping current unwinds its oily length in treacherous silence.

It becomes a hungry river, eager for victims! A darksome river, concealing terrible secrets! A tragic pitiless river. Indeed, it has ever been an only too willing accomplice to crime. A mocking river! It has good cause to laugh at poor humanity's

transient dreams, for it has seen dynasties born but to die, the conquered succeed the conquering in a current of events as rapid and unceasing as that of its own changing waters. For is it not the destiny of man, like that of the river, to flow onward for ever, without pause or rest, through time incalculable, to unknown ends?

For centuries men have fought incessantly along these banks, for the Seine has reflected the life of Paris, since Paris was composed of the one small island, known as "la Cité," upon which Notre Dame stands, lifting airy towers into the sunlit air, or looming mysterious against a midnight sky. How many moons have laid their silver fingers on the darkling fretwork of stone? How many feet have worn the antique steps?

Revolutionary hurricanes have arisen, tearing its statues from off their niches, threatening with destruction even the beautiful and stupendous framework; but, as though guarded by an unseen Providence, it has survived change upon change, and will remain, probably, even after the creed it symbolises has passed into legend. As it was six hundred centuries ago, so it is to-day, the heart of the City's heart, the jewel in the lotus.

We pass silently, with reverent steps, before this giant of inspiration. Our road leads us to humbler walls, which lie forgotten, awaiting their fate, in silence and neglect.

In the heraldic arms of the City of Paris appears, amid fleurs de lys, a bark, which was meant to symbolise the Island of "la Cité," shaped like a boat, its prow pointing towards the setting sun, moored by its bridges to the banks on either side. It was here that the Romans built their first bridge, their temples and palaces, fragments of which remain as an obstacle to the tunnelling and tubing of modern life. The Gallo-Roman port was on the north-east side of the island.

The present Palais de Justice stands upon the site of the antique palace of the first Merovingien Kings of France, of which, however, nothing is left but the mere foundations. It

GATE OF THE PALAIS DE JUSTICE.

was there that justice was rendered, that Parliaments were held; later on it became the theatre in which the sittings of the terrible Revolutionary Tribunal took place. Unfortunately, the old and picturesque buildings have been entirely engulfed in hideous, modern structures. Of the antique palace there remains only the Tour de l'Horloge and the two towers left upon the river, which formed the portcullis entrance of the bridge built by "Charles le Chauve." Fouquier Tinville and his family lodged in "La Tour Cesar."

Even the Sainte Chapelle, that marvel of architectural beauty, built in 1248 by Pierre de Montereau, has been closed from sight and buried away behind the dull, blank walls of the modern buildings.

St. Bernard preached in a chapel on the Island, and, during the Reign of Terror, a colony of priests lived there, disguised as masons, carters, water-carriers, or municipal guards, holding mass, sometimes in a garret, sometimes in a cellar, by the flickering flame of a tallow dip; the congregation of the faithful meeting in secret or at the dead of night. Under various disguises, and at the imminent peril of their lives, these devoted priests penetrated even to the revolutionary prisons, bearing, concealed under their clothes, the Holy Sacrament to those in need of their ministry.

Behind Notre Dame, at the extremity of the Island, stands a low, Doric building of unpretending aspect. Yet the cathedral itself is hardly better known than its humble neighbour, the Morgue. Day and night, the doors of that celebrated mortuary chapel stand open to the curious, to the seekers after sensation, or to those irresistibly attracted by the atmosphere of crime. All day long streams of visitors pass along the narrow passage, where, behind a glass partition, the stiff and contorted dead hold their ghastly reception. They lie in a row, inclined on couches, frozen in the postures in which death has surprised them. The agony, the suffering, the despair of their lives remains graven upon the poor rigid features, as though

their terrible emotions had not been stilled, but merely petrified in a moment, for all eternity; even the peace of death denied to them. And the thoughtless, indifferent crowd, some with a passing sigh, some with an idle jest, step into the sunshine again, and forget.

It was on the 31st of May, 1578, that Henry III. de Valois, accompanied by the Queen Mother Catherine de Medicis, his wife Louise de Vaudémont, and a galaxy of perfumed, curled, and be-jewelled favourites, drove in state from the Louvre to lay the corner-stone of what Parisians still know as the Pont Neuf. The narrow, wicked face of the King wore an expression of sullen gloom, for his cherished favourite, the Count de Quélus, had died that very morning, from the wounds he had received in the celebrated duel of the "Mignons." The townspeople, noticing the sombreness of the Royal countenance, dubbed the structure, due to the plans of Germain Pilon and Androuet du Cerceau, "The Bridge of Tears," and, for some time, this name clung to it: but after the Pont Neuf was inaugurated by the jovial King Henry of Navarre, it became one of the gayest and most popular resorts of the city, along which plodded an unceasing procession of soldiers, hawkers, monks, or ambulating merchants, so that it grew to be an adage "that one could never cross the bridge without meeting a white horse, a monk, and two wantons."

It was the official route of the royal processions, and Henry IV., who long after his death remained popular with the Parisians, was there perpetuated in a bronze effigy which stands to-day, as it did in 1789, when the people arrested the coaches of the gentry as they passed, and forced the occupants to alight and bow to the democratic King. During the Revolution of '93, the statue, like that of all the kings, was pulled down, to be re-erected by Louis XVIII. at the Restoration.

As we stand and look upon the shining river here in the heart of Paris, the scene is full of life and activity; and, as it sparkles in the sunlight, we can hardly realise that the bril-

liant, pleasure-loving city hides beneath its enchanting aspect not only the memories of a thousand tragedies, but the possibility of a thousand more—for the heart of Paris is ever restless and full of wild caprices.

It was near by, almost under the shadow of Notre Dame, that the great "Coach d'Eau," a huge, cumbersome barge, laden with passengers and parcels, arrived after its slow voyage by canal or river from Dijon. Here, one Spring morning of the year 1779, a pale, delicate youth, shabbily dressed, stepped from the public conveyance, looking up with wondering eyes at the mass of the Cathedral towering above him. Did the Emperor Napoleon, as he entered the sanctuary of the Kings, to be consecrated with the crown of Charlemagne, recall that lonely lad's arrival in the great city? when twenty-five years before, unfriended and a stranger, he alighted in Paris on his road to the Military Academy of Brienne, taking his first step in a career of triumph that was to lead him to the throne of France.

Near Notre Dame and the Pont Neuf, in the altered and modernised courtyards of the Palace of Justice, to the right of the great stairway, stands an iron railing and gateway of unpretending aspect which leads to the "Buvette" or Bar of the Palace. Uninteresting as it appears, it is hardly to be wondered at, that of the hundreds who pass it daily, few stop to inquire into its past history. And yet, could the rusty, iron hinges speak, what a tale would they not tell us, for this same insignificant barrier is one of the sole surviving relics of the terrible year of '93, one that played no mean part in the Reign of Terror.

From the very gateway we gaze at, the endless procession of the condemned to death passed to mount the fatal carts which stood waiting to convey them to the guillotine. From within this barrier came forth the young and beautiful, the old and honoured, the vile and odious, the guiltless and the guilty. Dame Guillotine's sharp tooth knew no distinction, and with keen appetite devoured all alike.

As we stand here amid the peaceful bustle of a fair morning, the present fades away from before us. It is four o'clock on the afternoon of a hot August day during the Summer of '93. The gate swings open, and, with set faces, the line of prisoners slowly files into the courtyard, where, under the scorching rays of the sun, Samson, pencil in hand, docks off name after name on his interminable lists, as men and women, old and young, mount into the waiting carts. Above, at an open window, Fouquier Tinville, a grin on his diabolical face, watches with satisfaction the numbers of his victims, as he stands picking his teeth after his copious mid-day dinner. There is no cloud in the steely sky; no change, day after day, in the scorching monotony of the torrid weather, no change in the ruthless sea of upturned faces, gathered to jeer at those led forth to die—no pity, no tenderness anywhere. And the earth, a ball of fire, seems to roll purposeless through eternity on some dreadful errand. Will no cloud ever again bring relief? Will no shade but that of the hard bars of the old gateway fall upon the condemned faces, upturned to look for the last time upon the sky. The widowed Queen's black robe and silvered hair must pass beneath that fatal shadow. It falls on Charlotte Corday's earnest eyes, on Madame Roland's inspired brow, on the thoughtful face of the sweet poet, André Chénier, on the broken-hearted Camille Desmoulins, and his beloved Lucie. The disdainful members of the ancient aristocracy, the Utopian Girondins, the instigators of the Revolution, the leaders of the Terror, all must pass beneath it and, still unsatisfied, the yelling crowd cries for more victims, and more are found.

Pick your yellow tusks, insatiable wolf of a Fouquier! Smile to-day, for to-morrow will blanch your sallow cheeks with a dastardly fear. The shadow of the iron bar will fall upon your soul, in its turn, marking the place where the blade of the guillotine severs your foul, scheming brain from the miserable body that has carried it all these years to such dire purpose.

How is it possible to stand before this grim relic without emotion? It is well that all about it has changed; it is well that the dumb spectators of that time of agony and crime should have been obliterated. It is not good to linger on the dark chapters of human history, and these are of the darkest; for the iron gate of the Palace of Justice is symbolic of an epoch in which the cruel waters of destruction were flooding the land, to which, as yet, no dove brought the olive branch of promise.

Let us turn to the back of the Palais de Justice, where we may find the charming old Place Dauphine, the scene of the first exhibition of paintings ever held in Paris. The artists hung their works on sheets, stretched across the fronts of the shops that lined one corner of the Square. If the morning was rainy the exhibition, which lasted but a day, was postponed to the following week. Here, in 1728, Chardin, then 29 years of age, exhibited the two studies in still-life known as "Le Raie" and "Le Buffet," which are now among the masterpieces of the Louvre. Among the artists who hung their pictures in this open salon, we find the names of Oudry, Restout, Boucher and Nattier. How far more delightful such an exhibition must have been, than the crowded galleries of our own day, from which we stagger forth half suffocated by the dust and heat!

Along the quais, we still find the remnants of the numerous silversmiths' shops, from which the Quai des Orfèvres was named, and near by, on the Quai des Celestins, before the Revolution, was the original Café Anglais, the only place in Paris at which English tourists of the 17th and 18th centuries were sure of finding home news, the latest pamphlets and papers, besides English beef and mutton chops. Here in the Christmas season John Bull might come to indulge in the national plum-pudding of sacred tradition, which, let us hope, was more carefully prepared than the mince-pies of a neighbouring cook-shop.

The story, though long since forgotten, created no small stir and no little emotion in the breasts of the Parisians of the

16th century. The scene of this gruesome comedy-drama was a house on the Quai, now called "des Orfèvres," from which, looking over towards the towers of Notre Dame, a barber's sign swung in the breeze. The proprietor, an adept in the art of shaving and bleeding (one of a barber's functions in those days), had considerable custom, and, owing to his favoured situation at the corner of the Pont Neuf, received both townspeople and traders passing in or out of the City gates. As time went on, however, an evil rumour mysteriously spread, and it was whispered that some of the numerous clients who entered the shop never reappeared again, while more than one traveller who had stopped to be shaved on his way through town was not observed to pass the gates. The evil reports of this strange "Figaro," however, did not affect his next door neighbour, and the pastry shop of the Pont Neuf was known far and wide, and largely patronised for the excellence and delicacy of its patés, which the epicureans of the quarter pronounced to be unrivalled. One day, as a client of the barber's sat being shaved, the street was aroused by the furious barking of a large hound, who, leaping into the barber's shop, upsetting the client in his chair, rushed, nose to ground, into a corner of the room, where he began a scratching and whining, that not all the infuriated barber's kicks could prevent. The neighbours, meanwhile, had gathered, full of curiosity. In their attempts to draw the dog away a mat was displaced, and the hinges and rings of a trap were disclosed to view. When it was opened the faithful hound was the first to jump down, and the crowd, following him, discovered the dog fondly licking and whining over the mutilated remains of the master, for whom he had been searching.

An investigation was made; the cellar was found to be full of the remnants of human bones, while—horror upon horror!—a subterranean passage was discovered, leading directly to the cold larder of the popular pastry-shop. Put to the torture, the luckless barber acknowledged himself guilty of a series of

crimes and declared his culinary neighbour to be his accomplice in a partnership that transformed unshaven gentlemen into succulent pork-pies. You may imagine into what a fit of indignation and indigestion the population, and especially the patrons of the "pâtisserie," were thrown by this gruesome discovery.

It is on the "Quai des Fleurs" that one of the charming open-air flower markets is still held. May it long remain to perfume with the sweet, damp odour of its boxes of carnations, heliotrope or mignonette, the gloomy shadows of the Préfecture de Police, beneath which it nestles.

Unfortunately the "Cité" has been so renovated that few traces of its past survive. The narrow streets that surrounded Notre Dame have been cleared away, and the old houses have disappeared to give place to new ones, hopelessly lacking in character, beauty, or historic interest. The street in which Abélard lived, the taverns which François Villon frequented, are but dim memories of a shadowy past. Law and justice have taken possession of "la Cité," and have erected their squares uncompromising modern strongholds, ordered, swept and severe, over the site of the rambling, irregular quarters that once surrounded Notre Dame, and the romantic district that Victor Hugo has immortalised.

Old walls are secretive in more ways than one. How often we may pass them before they deign to reveal the soul that lies hidden in all animate or inanimate things!

Years ago my almost daily walk led me by a house whose immutable aspect seemed to repel the observer and to deny all confidences. The windows were never opened to the sunshine, and at night were closed and barred by heavy shutters. Late one evening, as I strolled homewards, I happened to glance idly up at the familiar though forbidding frontage. To my surprise, from the square, dark face of the antique building, there looked down upon me, two windows, like eyes of light, suddenly opened. My interest aroused, I stopped, vaguely

surmising who might be the inhabitants of the old house. Had it a past and a present? It had always seemed to me strangely dead and inanimate. As I gazed upwards a woman's figure, tall and graceful, came slowly into the light. She stood for a moment looking out into the night and at the river beyond, then, with a wild gesture of abandonment, she dropped her head upon her hands and I could see her body shaken by a storm of weeping.

For some minutes I remained an unseen spectator of the silent drama that was being enacted in a fellow being's breast, then a feeling of shame came over me at watching such a moment of defeat. I had surprised the old house in a mood of weakness, the pulse that beat within it had come beneath my touch. I felt I had no right to linger and walked resolutely away, yet not without a backward glance. Against the sky the gabled roof stood out with strange distinctness, and, outlined by a square of light, the graceful figure was still bowed in silent agony.

The next day I looked up with a new and keener interest at what I felt had now become an old friend, for the sullen walls had revealed to me that they had a soul, a beating, breaking heart, in which warm human passions throbbed. Some time after, as I passed, I noticed a patch of white marble shining on the faded frontage. I approached it with some curiosity and read a notice, just put up, to the effect that Madame Roland had inhabited the house during her girlhood.

So the old building along the quay took on an added interest, even though its surly face never again showed the faintest sign of consciousness, but relapsed into its whilom immutability.

Was it the ghost of Manon Philipon I had seen that night? I grew almost to believe so, for, often as I passed, it never reappeared. Here Madame Roland spent all those aspiring years of a passionate girlhood, when the eager student applied herself with such ardent enthusiasm to the acquisition of knowledge. Years passed happily, the hours divided between her

studies, and rural excursions, with her kind parents, to the woods of Marly or Meudon, or to the forest of St. Germain. In the evening, as the sunset glowed upon the river, she would bring her book to the window, and the passers by might see the fair head, with its abundant curls, bent studiously over the heavy in-folio of a Greek philosopher, or over some grave dissertation upon law or ethics.

"A child of the Seine," she says, "it was upon its banks that my girlhood was spent. My parents' house stood upon the Pont Neuf, whose ever moving pictures varied with each passing hour. How many times have I not laid aside my work to gaze with deep emotion across the flowing river, towards the distant horizon of fair woods, over which fleecy clouds were afloat; how many times, as the evening shadows deepened upon the scene, I have felt tears gather in my eyes at the beauty of all that surrounded me, my heart bursting with a strange anticipation of emotion in the unknown future that awaited me!"

The future to which Manon Philipon looked forward so eagerly was a tragedy the thoughtful schoolgirl could little foresee!

United, by her parents' desire, to a grave and elderly man "whom she respected, but could not love," the first years of her married life passed quietly enough in maternal cares, and the pursuit of that knowledge, which was to make her, later on, the fitting leader and companion of the first minds of her day. But clouds were gathering over the peaceful sky, and the storm of the Revolution lowered on the horizon. Called to active participation in the stirring events of the times, Roland learned to lean more and more upon his young wife, whose restless and active intelligence was better in keeping with the race of hurrying events than the staid spirit of the placid Girondin.

She was a strange mixture, this Manon Roland; brave, disinterested, pure, an affectionate mother, a faithful wife; yet there seemed lacking in her character, notwithstanding all its

splendid qualities, the feminine element of charm that would have made her quite lovable. Perhaps it was that, until the last year or two before she died, she had known no other passion but that of patriotism; and woman needs, to develop her, a more responsive love than that of country. Certainly, from the time her intimacy with Buzot began, we may notice a change, a softening in her whole nature; for, notwithstanding the reserve of her attitude towards her friend, there undoubtedly existed a delicate and passionate sympathy between these two natures, so well made to comprehend each other. The rest must remain a mystery, for both Madame Roland and Buzot carefully destroyed their mutual correspondence at the time of their imprisonment, and it is only in the tone of a letter which escaped destruction, and was discovered accidentally afterwards, that we are led to conjecture the depth of the sentiment existing between the two ardent and exalted spirits.

Imprisoned, tried by the inexorable injustice of the Revolutionary Tribunal, Madame Roland was condemned to death. With admirable fortitude she heard her name called, and stepped from among the waiting prisoners to meet her fate. On that last day, with a touch of feminine feeling we do not often find in this revolutionary heroine, she had dressed herself with care and elegance. A white muslin frock, trimmed with old lace and tied with a broad, black velvet sash, set off to advantage a figure slightly inclined to plumpness. From under a large hat her hair, which had always been of remarkable beauty and luxuriance, fell upon her shoulders. Her face was animated and full of colour; no trace of tears remained in her fine eyes or marred the brilliance of her smile, as she bade adieu to her companions in misfortune, cheering each with kindly, parting words. Even the grim guardian, as he unlocked the door of the women's prison hall, kissed her hand with emotion.

She ascended the cart which was to take her to the guillotine in company with Lamarque. The man was trembling and terror-struck; the woman calm, indifferent, even gay.

By a strange fatality, the tumbril passed beneath the windows of the old house on the quay where Manon had spent the happy years of early life. As they neared the Pont Neuf, and the familiar home of her girlhood came into view, Madame Roland grew silent and absorbed.

What memories, what thoughts were hers? None may know! As she passed under the windows, from which she had leaned so often to gaze at the swift river, wondering, dreaming of the future in which she, a modest little bourgeoise, aspired to play a great role in the regeneration of France, she looked up long and thoughtfully. Did she sadly realise then, the vanity of all her youthful ambitions, of all her Utopian dreams of liberty; did she recognise that, like drift upon the current of the flowing river, the wisest, bravest and strongest are carried onward and downward by the mysterious tide of Fate?

GARGOYLES OF NOTRE DAME

ENTRANCE TO THE SOLEIL D'OR

CHAPTER VI

AROUND SOME OLD INNS

Surely, of all things mutable, few are more suggestive of a world in miniature than an inn. The stream of perpetual change ebbs and flows about its walls, yet it remains, year after year, unheeding the tragedies or comedies of the lives that come and go within and without it.

Dynasties may crumble, the map of continents be changed, but in this small world within itself, the real and important events

are the rooms that are to be prepared, the boots that must be blackened, the sheets that must be aired, the meals that have to be got ready at regular hours. What matter if new faces appear, and old forms, long familiar, disappear? The inn will give alike, to one and all, its same stiff, self-conscious smile of welcome. If the tenant of No. 16 died yesterday, to-day No. 16 will receive another comer. The flurry and worry of the outside universe can never affect a place with so absorbing an interior life of its own. It is true that an inn has its years of prime, of decadence, and of decay, but they follow more gradually and imperceptibly than ours, and its existence survives that of hundreds of its frailer human patrons. It sees the blushing bride mellowed into the portly matron, and the reckless buck of earlier years transformed into the gouty old gentleman of to-day, who orders gruel instead of port, and scolds if his broth is late.

Forms and features pass, backward and forward, even as shadows on a wall, to merge into the night of forgetfulness, and yet the old inn lingers on until we have ceased almost to believe that its day must come at last.

We can hardly exaggerate the importance of the part which hostelries have played. From immemorial ages, they have been one of the stages on which human events were acted, significant factors in the life of the time, whatever it may be, and as old, almost, as history itself.

Was it not to the stable of an overcrowded inn that Mary, the wife of Joseph of Arimathea, journeyed, on the eve of a wintry day, twenty centuries ago? A date to become the greatest in our occidental history.

Herodotus attributes the first inns to the Libians, but we find records of their existence in the Egyptian hieroglyphics, where evidence is given that not only the flesh pots, but also the wine pots of Egypt were freely worshipped. When the sacred rights of hospitality declined in Greece, immediately after the Trojan war, travellers found it necessary to have recourse to rest houses,

where they might be able to exact, for a fixed sum regulated by law, the food and lodgings that were no longer spontaneously and generously offered to them. Diogenes was a great frequenter of public-houses, and probably had helped materially to empty the wine cask he afterwards affected as a habitation.

Xenophon is loud in his praises of the comforts and delights of the Persian hostelries, where a postal service, probably the first that ever existed, had been organised for the convenience of travellers: and musicians, dancers, and courtesanes were kept in readiness for the guests' diversion. In Rome, houses of entertainment for man and beast were on a scale of luxury befitting the general life of the Empire. Our occidental world, however, long remained wildly barbarous, and in such respects was far behind the East. As late even as the Middle Ages, the poorer traveller was thrown upon his own resources to pass the nights as best he might, under a haystack, or cramped in a cave—unless he were lucky enough to fall across some peasant hospitably inclined, who might offer him a corner in the grange and a ladle of soup from the pot. Yet travellers were numerous! The highways were full of knights and retainers, journeying to and from the Crusades, or wandering troubadours, singing their way. The mendicant, the merchant, the monk, and scores of others floundered from country to country along the ill-kept roads.

True, there were convents. And at the convent gates the travellers might knock, sure of refuge and protection, and did so, until visitors became such a pest that abbots and monks grew tired of their exactions and brawling, and refused to receive them. Besides, it was scant refreshment that the fathers offered. Wine was forbidden in the refectories, meat was rare, and a cell afforded but cold comfort as a resting place. So, in course of time, under the shadow of the convent walls, small rest houses and taverns sprang into existence, where, indeed, the jolly fathers themselves were not averse to broaching a cask and drinking the health of St. Martin, to whom, as the patron of

all goodfellowship and drunkenness, the first primitive inns were dedicated. These hostelries grew and prospered to such an extent that they became the scenes of riotous living and debauchery; and the Holy Abbots were obliged to forbid monks and lay brothers from entering their precincts. He was a bold traveller who would venture, alone and with a well-filled purse, into such death traps, where ruffianly adventurers, willing to cut a throat for a ducat, were always in waiting.

The innkeepers, moreover, asked any prices they chose, according to their estimation of the traveller's appearance. The system grew to be such an imposition that accounts were more often settled with fists than with silver, and bills receipted more readily with a rapier point than with a pen. To such an extent had this abusive habit of cheating grown, that Henry III. issued an edict prescribing a fixed and lawful tariff, which was not to be exceeded. The tables were now turned on mine host, who, in his turn, began to have somewhat of a bad time. It grew to be the sport of all, and the profession of some of the good-for-nothings in the kingdom to travel from place to place, eating and drinking of the best that kitchen and cellar could offer, and disappearing before the reckoning was paid, until the saying "taking French leave" passed into a proverb!

Maître François Villon, that rare and delightful poet, that incorrigible scalliwag, was one of the merriest and boldest of these impossible rapscallions. Trudging from tavern to tavern and from town to town, his head as full of rhymes as his pouch was empty of coppers, he played a hundred mad pranks, of which he has left us a frank confession in his inimitable verses. Nothing daunted by the lightness of his purse, Maître François would enter the best hostelry he could find, order of the choicest, and, while he ate and drank to his fill, would keep the company in a roar with his wit, until, under cover of their laughter, he would slip off and away, rhyming upon his exploit.

"C'est bien disné quand on s'échappe,
Sans débourser pour ung denier
Et dire adieu au tavernier,
En torchant son nez à la nappe."

Villon, alike the father of poets and of tramps, loved the open road, with its adventures and expedients. If poor in worldly goods, he was rich in imagination, and his ready brain always furnished him with a trick by which to gain a dinner from an unwilling landlord. If the worst came to the worst, and he was refused admittance—and, indeed, his disreputable appearance could hardly have been a letter of recommendation—he tried bolder tactics. Maître François was rarely troubled with scruples of delicacy. He would linger around the precincts of the kitchen, wheedling the turnspit, until the latter turned his back, when François never losing a chance or a minute, would deftly unhook the roasting joint or the capon, and, equally careless of his fingers and his reputation, be off to munch his dinner on the highway, leaving the cook to curse vainly. I doubt much whether the enraged domestic would have been appeased by the knowledge that the nimble vagabond who had just stolen his dinner from the fire would go down to posterity as one of the first and most perfect masters of French verse, though we, who live four centuries and a half after Villon, may, perhaps, be magnanimous enough to do so!

One of Villon's immediate successors, another remarkable François, François Rabelais, was born at Chinon in the "Hotel de la Lamproie," and, like many another celebrated man, was the son of a hotel-keeper. Doubtless his early training served not a little to develop his nomad spirit, and his knowledge of men. He had little more respect for rules and laws than had Villon, and revelled in a good bottle, drunk under a vine-clad porch, and served by a pretty maid; he was fond of a free jest or a racy story, and has told not a few in his own inimitable way.

Of another ilk was the severe Master Calvin, the great reformer, who, although the son of a landlord, eschewed good living, while the studious Erasmus, on the contrary, confesses to the love of a copious supper, even on a Friday, and cries plaintively, "I have the soul of a good Catholic, but, alas, the belly of a Lutheran."

Cyrano, whom Mr. Rostand has made doubly famous—and who, by the way, was not from Bergerac—was a frequenter and lover of taverns, and had even chosen, as his friend and intimate, an inkeeper, by name Ragenaud, who was as renowned for his good verses as for his wonderful pastry.

One of the most famous inns in the Paris of those days was the celebrated Pomme de Pin, which Rabelais, Regnard, Boileau, and Racine frequented. Landlords who were complacent would give a year's credit to their patrons; indeed, the custom still prevails in the Latin quarter, where many a poor student would go to bed dinnerless, could he not depend upon his landlord's patience and generosity.

France, the birthplace of culinary genius, soon became celebrated for the quantity and quality of its hostelries. He was a lucky traveller whose road took him to such inns as the Rose de Blois, the Cross and Mitre, at Tours, and a score of others as well known then as our Ritz and Savoy of to-day. Imagine with what envy and wonder mine host of a couple of hundred years ago would listen to the items on a modern hotel bill. But, then, charges were very different. The traveller paid so much for his horse and himself, and half the amount again for what was called the table, which consisted of the privilege of three solid meals a day. The Emperor Maximilian's Ambassador writes to his master, from the sign of the Angel, in Venice, that his accommodations are the best to be procured for money; he extols the cooking as being of the choicest, and the lodgings as being worthy of the high power he represents; and adds that he pays thirty sols a day for man and horse. I wonder how an ambassador would fare to-day for a shilling! Great and

COURTYARD OF THE "COMPAS D'OR."

small, noble and pedlar, came to the same inns: the great ate in the hall, the poor in the kitchen. We are told by Tallemand that King Henry of Navarre enjoyed nothing better than to sit, unrecognised, at a public table, to hear what his people said of their king. When the criticism was unfavourable, he would listen and argue good-naturedly; but never failed to learn a lesson from what he heard.

We live in an age of progress. To travel, by land or sea, has become as easy as to sit in our own drawing room, beside the fire; hotels are models of luxury and comfort; trains carry us, rapidly and without change, through half a dozen countries, to another continent. We can step out of a sleeping-car at Pekin, hardly fatigued by our journey. All this is true, and, in a way, delightful; but let me plead guilty to a taste for the unexpectedness, the romance, the roughness, even, of old-world travel. We, of the twentieth century, certainly see more than our ancestors of a hundred or so years ago; but I doubt whether we see better. We congratulate ourselves on our ways; but, perhaps, our grandsires would have preferred their own. If they came back, they would regret the element of adventure which the old-time traveller met upon his road. They would miss the strange types of the travelling public, the accidents and incidents of the long journey, which made the cheery welcome, the smoking joint, the shining decanter all the more delightful, when found at the end of a hard day's travel.

There were many discomforts; but, on the other hand, there were many surprises, and a wealth of sensations for the traveller of those days. We, who shoot beneath the Alps in a dining-car, can never experience what must have been the entrancing delight of a descent into Italy in a post-carriage. Some of us think we have the same sensation, and have it more completely, in a motor; but it is all too easy. There is not the arduous climb to the eerie, bleak, rest-house on the summit of a snow-capped pass; there is not the early start in the crisp, chill morning air, which made the warm, perfumed breezes so exquisitely

comforting, as the horses jingled easily down the mountain it had taken days to climb, and terrace after terrace unfolded its luxurious gardens, while below stretched the vine-covered plains of Italy, buried in rich verdure. We make these eventful journeys only in dreams or in fancy; and what better starting point can we have than the antique "Auberge du Heaume," Rue Pirouette?

Here Rabelais might have spent a day, or Villon have stolen a dinner; for the Heaume dates from the fourteenth century, when it was a luxurious, richly patronised inn. Changes have been wrought since then; yet, with a very little imagination, one can reconstruct it, as it was four hundred years ago, the type of an hostlery of the past.

Under the stout doorway, we pass into the long, dark passage, its rafters black with the dust of centuries. Here is the classic, stone-paved courtyard, above which many windows open on to tier upon tier of balconies; we can imagine them crowded with curious eyes, as the clatter of a chaise on the pavement announces the arrival or departure of a distinguished patron. The host waits, bareheaded and obsequious, helping my lord to alight from his coach. The kitchen doors are open, and a dozen turnspits stand around the great fires, before which capons roasting and pots boiling send forth a savoury intimation that the event of the day, the dinner hour, is approaching. The plump landlady hurries to and fro, bustling the maids, and scolding the lazy valets; in the courtyard some travelling musicians whine a ditty.

'Tis a busy day at the Heaume—there are arrivals, departures! and guests must be speeded, as well as welcomed. Monsieur le Marquis' great yellow chariot has just rolled from the yard, with Pierre and Baptiste behind in the rumble, armed to the teeth; for there are rumours of gentlemen on the roads to Normandy—suspicious gentlemen with courtly manners, block masks, and fleet steeds—whom it is as well travellers should avoid. Pierre and Baptiste, I fancy, are not too reassured,

though they put on a bold front. Yes; we can imagine all these old-world sights and sounds, as we stand in the courtyard of the venerable tavern.

Strange visitors occupy it to-day—strange, silent visitors, never in a hurry, who have no need of rooms, for each one carries his house on his back. Do you guess who they are? It has always struck me that there is a queer appropriateness in plain facts, and it seems delightfully symbolic that the sole guests in this old, old hostelry, that has changed so slowly, should be snails! Snails, wholesale and retail, sold by thousands in the Halles near by.

All this quarter is full of memories and relics, hidden away, half buried; but to be found, if we have the patience and curiosity to hunt for them. Under a modern frontage, down this dark alley, or walled away in that sordid courtyard, exists some well-known, once beautiful mansion, with noble carvings, sculptured stairway, and painted and fretted panels. There is no sport more absorbing than that of the antiquary. More than once I have forgotten my own dinner, in my desire to find out where some dead hero ate his.

In the Rue Pas de Mule, the "Fosse aux Lions," partly on account of its proximity to the Hotel de Bourgogne, became a literary club, where men of wit and letters were sure to find congenial society, and could discuss the events of the day over a good bottle of wine.

Literature owes a countless debt to taverns, and, perhaps—had water been our only beverage—the world would have been poorer by more than one "inspiration of genius." One at least of the most assiduous frequenters of La Fosse au Lion, the poet Voiture, was a confirmed wine-hater; every day found him seated, before his glass of water, at this favourite tavern of the 17th century. Another of its faithful patrons was the Comte de St. Amand, a man as noted for his wit as for his insobriety. Strolling in one day, more than usually bellicose with wine and

hilarity, he found Voiture, seated quietly at a table with some friends, sipping his accustomed beverage.

"Odds fish, man!" cried the Count, "What's that strange stuff you are smacking your lips over?"

"Water," said Voiture, "the best drink in the world."

"That, by my honour, I'll not allow you to say!" shouted St. Amand. "It turns my stomach completely, merely to look at the stuff, when there is good Burgundy to be had here for the asking."

Voiture, seeing that the other was more than usually tipsy, shrugged his shoulders and went on with the discussion he had been engaged in; but St. Amand was not to be disposed of so easily; he had become contumacious.

"Come, Monsieur Voiture," he cried, "have a glass with me," and he emptied a flagon of Burgundy, placing a tumbler before the poet. But Voiture, who hated the sight and taste of claret, had no mind to drink, and pushed the wine away.

"This is certainly strange conduct on your part, Monsieur," cried St. Amand, "You, surely, more than any man present, should know the value of good wine." Voiture, whose father had been a tavern keeper, scowled at the allusion contained in St. Amand's words, and the latter, seeing he had at last touched a sensitive spot, continued, "Pray, M. Voiture, what would your worthy father have said, to know his son refused a glass of what he had passed his life selling?" Voiture rose to go, for the discussion was becoming unpleasant, but the drunken Count detained him by the coat.

"Come, Monsieur Voiture," he drawled with insistence, "Come, do not let me think you are ashamed of your father."

"No!" roared the infuriated poet, "That, no man shall say."

"Then I suppose you'll not refuse to pledge his health," and St. Amand handed him a tumbler of wine. Poor Voiture turned red and green by turns, with exasperation at being caught in a trap, and disgust at the wine he hated. All eyes were fastened on him; it must be a duel, or an encounter of

RUE DE VENISE.

wits. St. Amand, draining his glass, cried to his opponent to do likewise, and the etiquette of the time commanded the unlucky waterdrinker to follow suit.

"To my father," said Voiture solemnly, and, with somewhat of a grimace, drained his glass. "You'll pledge me a health in return," he cried, putting down his tumbler with a bang.

"A dozen!" shouted the tipsy Count.

"Landlord," called Voiture, "Fill the Count de St. Amand's glass with your best cold water." "You are going to pledge me the health of the Muse, of whom we are both humble votaries; you can hardly refuse me, Monsieur."

The laugh was turned against St. Amand now, for he must follow his challenger's example, but, at the first swallow of water, he choked. He tried to get down the remainder, for Voiture was there insisting, but it made him so ill that it was an hour before he finished, and the chaff that greeted him on all sides assured him that the poet had got the better of the wit in their encounter and, for days after, St. Amand could not appear in an assembly of people without a glass of water being facetiously offered to him.

The narrow Rue de Venise still exists. It is now but a noisome alley, the haunt of the lowest and most brutal vice in the city; yet the houses on either side are the same tall, narrow buildings we would have looked up at two centuries ago, had we been on our way to No. 27, the well-known "Epée de Bois." Many a plumed hat and diamond-hilted rapier has passed through yonder narrow doorway! Wits, nobles, beaux, comedians, gentlemanly adventurers, gathered to gamble, revel, or quarrel in the small, low-ceilinged room in which to-day a slatternly barmaid hands drinks across a zinc counter to the apaches and poor wantons of the quarter, who are the sole frequenters of the place.

Silks, velvets, laces and periwigs have been replaced by rags and torn jackets, and the sordid, sinister crew who are gathered, talking in low voices, with furtive looks, seem ready to commit

any crime for a few francs with which to gamble at dominoes, or drink oblivion of their life in the bad absinthe the place offers. But, beneath their embroidered waistcoats, the hearts of the fine gentlemen of the past were little better, perhaps, than those of the poor occupants of the Epée de Bois to-day. They were a wild crew of gamblers, spendthrifts, and debauchés. We read how the Count de Horn, scion of a princely German house, waylaid and assassinated a banker named Lacroix at the corner of the Rue de Venise, in broad daylight, and stole his purse, hoping to spend the ill-gotten gains in riotous living.

The Epée de Bois was noted for its gambling, its wine, and its company of musicians, singers and dancers, who had obtained letters patent from Mazarin, entitling them to act as a regular troop. Their leader was called the king of violins, and from this same primitive wandering company came the founders of what is now the National Academy of Music.

When Philippe d'Orleans was Regent, John Law and his "Mississippi bubble" floated a golden mirage before the public imagination. Then the Rue de Venise was the centre of the life and movement of the time. Law's office was in the Rue Quincampoix near by, and at mid-day the noted inn was crowded with customers, come to snatch a hasty dinner and hurry back to hear the latest quotations of the illusory stocks that were thrown on the market, to be blindly taken up by the eager public, literally mad with the fever of speculation. Fortunes changed hands in a few minutes, values fell, or rose like a wild tide which sweeps all before it. Rich and poor, the prince or the valet, none were exempt from the contagion. At this very Epée de Bois, between two glasses of claret, Marivaux found himself a ruined man, and Louis de Racine lost, to the last penny, the modest fortune he owed to his great father's genius. Law, dining upstairs, looked down at the crowds surging back and forth beneath him in the street, and cried mockingly, "Come on, come on, we will have you all—all—all!" And so he did, for they fell into his nets like

shoals of greedy fish, allured by a glittering bait. The seeds of the Revolution were sown in the Rue Quincampoix, sown in golden ducats, to be reaped, a hundred years after, in an abundant harvest—of heads.

We can still see the window from which the wily Scot sneered contemptuously at his victims; but the crowds whom he swindled, the unscrupulous adventurer himself, the millions that rose to billions upon paper, and vanished like a golden bubble, into air; all are gone! Only the legend of folly, and the little inn itself, once the scene of such varied action, remains, like a rock, to mark a shoal in an ocean of change. The poor street in which it stands seems so far from the brilliant city of to-day that it belongs to a world apart, a world as grim and grimy as the hard faces we meet there.

At No. 41, Rue du Temple, there were two other celebrated inns, the Soleil d'Or and the Aigle d'Or. Gold was the god of the hour, an ignus-fatuus that beckoned and lured the crowd. Sign boards of taverns are weather-cocks that turn as the wind of popular opinion blows. In periods of loyalty, we have "Kings Arms," "Crowns," "Mitres and Crosses"; at times of revolution, it is "The People's Friend," or "The Labourers' Rest." During the terror we find even the guillotine serving as godmother, and a hundred grim names spring up on every side, indicative of the direction from which, for the moment, the hurricane blows.

The Compas d'Or, 64, Rue Montorgueil, is a typical old auberge of the 15th, 16th, and 17th centuries. Its great "hangar" is one of the sole remaining in Paris, and we can imagine it, crowded with the post carriages and diligences, that once started from its rugged pavement on their way to the North.

The immense space required by the Central Market destroyed not a little of this quarter of the "Halles," one of the most ancient in Paris. Houses, like the two women at the well, are taken or left, for no reason more apparent than that strange fatality to which buildings, as well as human

COUR DE ROUEN.

beings are subject. So it has been in the Rue Vauvilliers, formerly known as the Rue du Four St. Honorè. The street was cut down the middle, one side becoming the outside wall of the Halles, while the side that bears the odd numbers has remained untouched, just as it was a hundred years ago. It is a poor, hard-working street; was never, indeed, anything but a modest one, in which the houses were small, the stairways steep and narrow. Under the dark red paint of an old house, bearing the number 33, one could distinguish, not so many years ago, the words "Hotel de Cherbourg." Up the dingy stairway we have toiled. It is squalid and dilapidated, with that peculiar suffocating odour of a house long inhabited by the poorer classes of the population. Dingy doors give access to small rooms, opening upon a sombre landing. The balustrade of the stairway is dilapidated and awry. Yet we cannot look on it without emotion, for the rusty iron has felt the hand of Napoleon; he has turned the key in yonder lock, walked across the doorway into his lonely and modest room. What dreams may he not have had here, what presentiments, what forebodings! Surely, during the long nights, fate must have entered his solitary chamber, bearing an admonition of the destiny that awaited him.

In 1787, the house was owned and kept by a Corsican named Vedrine, and here Napoleon Bonaparte, sallow, emaciated, melancholy, and poorly dressed, came to live. It was, even then, a sombre little dwelling place, in keeping with the meagre fortunes of the young officer. He gave little trouble, was quiet and uncommunicative beyond his years, received no friends nor visitors, and remained most of the time in his room on the third storey, from which he would sally forth for his meals to a small restaurant near by, in the Passage des Pères, where what he ordered was of the simplest and cheapest. He would pay his reckoning himself at the counter, as though ashamed to own, even to the waiter who served him, that his dinner had cost him but sixpence.

When he had finished he would hurry back to his lodgings and lock himself in for the night, suffering cruel pangs of home-sickness for his wild, native island of Corsica, with its sun-swept hills, whose perfume, he said long after, was the only one in the world he could tolerate, and which he recognised even from six miles out at sea, as he passed it, in the night, on his road to Elba and exile.

Here, to this very Hotel de Cherbourg, he returns one evening, not alone, as usual, to dream, or by the light of a guttering candle to compose clumsy imitations of Racine and Rousseau. No, not alone; he has found a companion, as friendless and abandoned as himself; a poor girl of the streets, little more than a child, yet already racked by the cruel cough of the consumptive. He had met her in the galleries of the Palais Royal, had pitied her, questioned her, brought her back with him, to share the loneliness of his humble lodgings. So for a few hours these solitary barks met, on the sea of chance, to separate on the morrow—the lad to sail into the fiery sunrise of his magnificent destiny, the girl to disappear in the stormy night of hers. The hours were passed by Napoleon in questions as to her life, its why and wherefore. He was deeply touched and influenced by her story, was probably gentler and more humane with the woman of the street than ever he was afterwards in his intercourse with the many women fate threw across his path. Such an event, in the monotony of his isolated existence, was an incident of unusual meaning and importance. He never forgot it, and years afterwards, amongst the Emperor Napoleon's papers, was found an account of that night: his questions and the girl's answers. It was dated November 22nd, 1789, Hotel de Cherbourg, Rue du Four St. Honorè.

We could tell a hundred tales of the famous Café de la Régence, frequented by Rousseau, which had as its patrons all the men of the Revolutions of '93 and '48. It stood at the entrance of the Palais Royal. Danton and Camille Desmoulins

harangued the crowds there; St. Just's fair, vicious face was reflected in its mirrors, and never a day passed without bringing the brothers Robespierre for their game of chess. During the Reign of Terror, the café was deserted by most of its clients. It was on the road by which the tumbrils, charged with condemned prisoners, passed to the place of execution. Looking up from dinner one would see the pale victims on their way to the guillotine! One day Maximilien Robespierre entered the café, to find it deserted except for the presence of a foppish-looking lad, who offered himself as an adversary for the habitual game of chess, which was the one favoured recreation of the despot's busy day. They seated themselves at a table, and the boy soon proved himself a master at the game. Robespierre, biting his nails with annoyance—for he was a poor loser and hated to be beaten—saw one piece after another disappear, until game after game had been won by his adversary. Finally he rose to go, having lost the last cent in his pocket. His companion, however, detained him.

"Come, citizen, the luck has been against you, but I'll give you another chance."

"I've nothing left, you've emptied my purse," scowled Maximilien. "What would you have me bet?"

"Surely, what you deal in," laughed the other. "Will you wage me a head?"

The game began, and Robespierre lost again! The boy flushed with excitement, drew a paper from his coat: it was an order for the release of a prisoner detained at "la Force": it needed but the tyrant's signature.

"Sign here," the youth said, handing a pen to Robespierre, who, half annoyed, half amused, did so.

"And now, citizen," he enquired, looking somewhat grimly at his opponent, "you must tell me your name also."

"That I will never do," cried the other, "you must call me citoyenne!—and hurrah for the Goddess of Fortune, who has given me the chance to win back my lover!" Before the

THE CHEVAL BLANC

astonished Robespierre could detain her, his amazing adversary was off in a flash, and, darting among the crowd, disappeared from view.

Certainly another history-making tavern was the famous Café Procope, where Diderot, d'Alembert, Condorcet, and the encyclopædists met. Nothing remains of it but its fine old balcony, from which, in 1867, Gambetta impressed the students with the lightning and thunder of his fiery eloquence. In the eighteenth century Marmontel, the younger, and Boivin had chosen the Café Procope as a convenient meeting ground for the discussion of philosophy. As they wished to remain uninterrupted by outsiders, they had adopted a formula by which they agreed to speak of the soul as Margot, of religion as Javotte, of liberty as Jeanneton, and of God as Monsieur l'Etre. Their plan worked to perfection, and the frequenters of the café paid no attention to their endless discussions, until one day a sallow-faced stranger entered, and, seating himself at an adjoining table, listened to the conversation. As it waxed warmer and warmer, he drew his chair nearer, and finally addressed Marmontel:

"Sir," said he, "I have heard you speaking for the last three hours, and in most violent terms, of a certain Monsieur l'Etre." May I enquire who he is?"

"Monsieur," replied Marmontel bowing, "The gentleman in question is a celebrated police spy that we are all afraid of. I trust, for your sake, that it may be long before you meet him."

The brilliant dinners that the Goncourts speak of in their journal, took place at Procope. Gauthier, Renan, Ste. Beuve, Flaubert, and Garvarni were among the guests who met to discuss politics, science, and art, over the excellent Bordeaux which Monsieur Mangy, the proprietor, claimed to be the best in France.

A half-dozen paces further, and we stand at the entrance of the booking office, from which the coaches for Blois and

Orléans started semi-weekly. No. 5, Rue Mazet, was the noted inn of the "Cheval Blanc," dating from 1662. In the stalls, where rows of smoking coach horses champed their well-earned oats, there are now but half-a-dozen sleepy nags, awaiting the return of their owners, the proprietors of the market waggons that occupy the vast coach-house of former times. The place has all the quiet of a country churchyard. The antique flags, grass-grown and mouldy, the tumbling walls, the old mounting block for horsemen, all speak of a past long dead. Yet what bustle it must have once resounded to! The walls have echoed to the sobs of fond hearts torn asunder; the unevenly worn stones have been trod by eager feet, scarce waiting for the great lumbering vehicle to stop, before they sprang to ground in the impatient ecstasy of arrival. From under the wide doorway, the ponderous diligence, drawn by four stout horses, with booted postillions, piled with luggage and crowded with passengers, would sway forth on its long journey, attended by an armed guard, to an accompaniment of cracking whips, waving handkerchiefs, and shouts of running urchins. We can hardly realise to-day the emotion that the arrival and departure of the mail coach evoked in the waiting population! It was the one regular channel of communication with the outside world; it represented what trains, mails, and telegraphs mean to us. It came, bringing with the dust of its wheels, news of the past, rumours of the future, and all the glorious romance of the road.

I can remember with what thrills of delight my childish fancy pictured the stories told me by old grandparents, who had lived at the time when stage coaching was still in its zenith. How my mind was filled with wonderful visions of night journeys, highwaymen, unexpected and surprising adventures, the roaring fires of welcoming inns, the loneliness of unfrequented moorlands, the sombre glow of wayside smithies! All these old-world pictures would chase each other along the highway of my

dreams, to the sound of cracking whips, the notes of the post horn, and the cadence of galloping hoofs.

The stage coach, alas! has rumbled along the old post road of Time, never to return! Perhaps it is something of the sunset radiance of its whilsome glory that lights the mouldy courtyard of the "Cheval Blanc," and evokes, from its antique and decaying skeleton, the golden soul of Romance.

DILIGENCE, XVIIth CENTURY

SIGN OF THE "SALAMANDER"
20 RUE DE L'HIRONDELLE.

CHAPTER VII

NOTRE DAME DE THERMIDOR

One December afternoon, in 1785, an old-fashioned, lumbering berlin, mud-bespattered by days of travel, drew up before the door of a large house bearing the number 29, Quai de Bourbon. The carriage might well be travel-stained, for it had come direct from Spain. The door was flung open, and a girl of some twelve years sprang lightly forth, eagerly shaking her jetty curls, and stretching her lithe limbs, cramped by their long confinement. Not waiting for her brother, or the Abbé who had accompanied them, to alight, she ran across the courtyard, and up the great stairway, where her future host and guardian, Monsieur de Boisgelin, stood waiting to receive the two young Spaniards who had been confided to his care by their father, the Count Cabarrus, a rich banker of Madrid.

The little Donna Theresa soon won the hearts of her new friends. Nature had endowed her generously for the role she was destined to play in after life. In the hospitable old house on the Quai Bourbon, shaded by graceful poplars and over-looking the river, Theresa began an education which was to fit her, to fill a place in the world, compatible with her condition, beauty, and expectations.

Paris, during the years that preceded the Revolution, was a centre of refinement, intelligence, and pleasure, unequalled in all Europe. "He who has not lived during these years," wrote Talleyrand, long afterwards, "cannot realize the joy life may offer." Into that brilliant and delightful society, the beautiful Mademoiselle de Cabarrus soon found herself launched. As she blossomed rapidly into womanhood, every day seemed to develop her perfect loveliness, added to which she sang and danced divinely, crowning her accomplishments by the exercise of an irresistible charm, and that ardent desire to please, which enhanced all of her womanly qualities. At fifteen, Theresa was introduced to the world, and at once found herself surrounded by a circle of adorers, who had no more important occupation than that of writing sonnets to the lovely Spaniard's bright eyes. Amongst a score of suitors and lovers with whom she had flirted or frivoled—for she was a born coquette—Theresa surprised her friends by choosing the Marquis de Fontenay, a young man, who, though sadly wanting in personal attraction, was a Member of Parliament, and brought with his title the solid advantage of a spendid fortune. Perhaps the beautiful girl of sixteen was so sure of meeting Don Cupid at every turn of her road through life, that she thought it unnecessary to instal him at her fireside. In any case it was a brilliant marriage, attended by all fashionable Paris, which took place at St. Eustache, on the 21st of February, 1788.

The young couple settled in the family house of the Fontenays, 13, Rue St. Louis-en-l'Ile. The honeymoon coincided with the Carnival, which, in that year of '88, was particularly brilliant; and the Marquis and Marquise de Fontenay, both fond of society, spent but few of their evenings without going to a ball, route, or card party. There Theresa found her old lovers, and made new ones, her appearance being the signal for an ovation wherever she went. Monsieur de Fontenay was not jealous. He had his own pleasures and associates, and soon took up again his bachelor life, and visits to

DOORWAY, ST. EUSTACHE.

LLOYD WENGROW

the opera, leaving his young wife to amuse herself as best she pleased. To do as she pleased, for Theresa, was to please; and to please was to awaken in her lovers' breasts a storm of sighs and supplications. Theresa was not cruel, and had few prejudices. She was only acting according to the customs of her world and the society in which she moved, a society which looked upon faithfulness as a grotesque and vulgar virtue practised only by the bourgeoisie; while a husband who would descend to such a sentiment as jealousy, was deemed a lout, and ridiculed as such. Certainly, the Marquis and Marquise de Fontenay, in this, as in other respects, were a couple that followed scrupulously the latest fashion. The Marquis was seen in the gardens of the Palais Royal, promenading a dancer on his arm, while the Marquise openly acknowledged the handsome juvenile, Lepelletier de St. Fargeau, as her lover. As a woman "a la mode," Theresa had her portrait made by the Queen's own painter, Madame Vigée Le Brun.

One day, while she and a number of her intimates were in the artist's studio—for wherever Theresa went she drew behind her a trail of admirers—the door opened, and a printer's boy came in, carrying in his blouse some proofs, to be signed by Riverol, one of the gentlemen present. The company were deep in a discussion as to the merits or demerits of the Marquise's likeness. Someone laughingly asked the printer's devil if he would give them his opinion. The latter advanced quite seriously, and, with perfect assurance, and without embarrassment, pronounced his judgment; fixing his eyes boldly on the beautiful model. "What is your name?" she asked carelessly, with the indolent good nature of a fine lady. "Jean Tallien," replied the young man, his eyes glowing with admiration as they met hers. Not displeased with the mute homage of the good-looking apprentice, the Marquise smiled at her humble admirer as he left the room slowly, with many a backward glance.

In the whirl of her life of pleasure, the Marquise de Fontenay, like most of the Society in which she moved, lacked

DOORWAY OF HOTEL DEFONTENAY.

both time and aptitude for the study of the larger world without, nor could she realise that the revolution's iron fist was already knocking loudly at the gilt doors of palaces. Theresa and her class had trifled airily with the "new ideas." The fine ladies and gentlemen of the 18th century, in their arrogant pride and contempt of the things that came from below, had played patronisingly with the revolution cub, as with a lap dog, little dreaming it was growing daily into a raging lion, that would rend them limb from limb. The Marquise de Fontenay had a political salon, where Rousseau and Voltaire were quoted, to which M. de Lafayette sometimes came to tell stories of his friend General Washington, and the American War, and where coquettes and dandies lisped the words "deficits," "vetoes," or "constitution," without well realising their import.

Suddenly, like a bolt from Theresa's sky, fell peril, hideous and imminent. To right and left the gay groups scattered. There was no more time for love-making or sighing; trunks must be packed hurriedly, passports obtained by gold or favour. Fashionable Paris became an army of emigrants, wakened by the cannon of the Bastille, from an opiate dream. Theresa, with the other birds of Paradise, took flight. The Marquis accompanied her; for the ill-assorted couple, though even then divorcing, agreed to travel to Bordeaux in the same post-chaise. The unsympathetic marriage of convenience ended with a voyage of convenience, prelude to a separation for life.

On the very day of his arrival in Bordeaux, the Marquis de Fontenay, having rapidly realised his fortune, and most of his wife's—which he forgot to return—obtained a passport under a false name, and sailed for Martinique; while Theresa was left to enter upon the most surprising career of adventure that ever a woman had.

The young Marquise de Fontenay had thought she would find in her brother's house at Bordeaux, a refuge, and a condition of affairs more secure than in Paris. She soon realized that she had but changed a fire for a furnace. In the Southern city,

where blood is hot, and passions are strong, the Revolution had taken complete hold of the population, and raged with even greater violence than in the capital of France itself. The aristocratic families who had been able to escape had already fled into Spain, or had embarked for foreign ports. Houses were closed, shops deserted, and the town given over to Revolutionary Committees, as unrelenting as those of Paris. Theresa was living with her eldest brother, who had established a branch of the Spanish bank in Bordeaux. He received her kindly, but gave his sister to understand at once that his position required the inmates of his house to conform to an orderly and sedate manner of living. Rigorous discipline, however, was not congenial to the Marquise's taste. Here, as everywhere on her path through life, she found admirers, but there was no means of meeting them, and the gay young Parisian of twenty ended by falling into a state of neurasthenia and depression, that left her a prey to morbid sentiments, for which her brother showed no pity.

The representative that the Revolutionary Government of Paris had named as Proconsul in Bordeaux, Jean Lambert Tallien, was then twenty-six years of age. Young as he was, Tallien had already acquired a reputation for violence, cruelty, and bloodshed, unsurpassed even amongst the men of that pitiless time. Born in a lodge—for he was the son of a concierge—he had profited but little by the education that his father's master, the Marquis de Bercy, had given him. Ungrateful, unstable, and resentful, he had drifted from employment to employment, until the tide of Revolution had swept him into a secretaryship in the offices of the Commune. It was Tallien who had been charged with the foul work of organising and putting into execution the massacres of September, 1792; a task so thoroughly performed that his zealous care gained him the confidence of the Committees. Elected as deputy for Seine-et-Oise, he became an active and assiduous frequenter of the violent club des Cordeliers, was amongst the most ardent

clamourers for the execution of the Royal family, and afterwards signalised himself by a hundred acts of low cupidity, and of insatiable vengeance against those unfortunate enough to fall into his power.

Such was the man, who, on the 16th of October, 1793, made his solemn entry into Bordeaux, accompanied by his co-delegate, Isabeau. A veil of cold mist hung over the town, when, with clatter of arms and tramp of feet, the Republican army passed slowly along the main thoroughfares of the city, which was to fall under their rule of tyranny and bloodshed. The two Conventionals, Tallien and Isabeau, rode at the head of the column, in their sombre, pro-consular uniforms. Isabeau, heavy and coarse, repelled every one by his vulgar appearance; Tallien impressed the crowd more favourably. He was tall, slight, and not ill-favoured, with regular features, light eyes, and curly hair. His new uniform was worn with an attention to detail and decorative effect, that showed he was not indifferent to the impression he created.

From behind carefully drawn blinds Theresa looked curiously down upon the sinister "cortège" as it passed. Did she recognise, that day, in the insolent Conventional who, with a sneer on his face, rode cavalierly through the throngs, her humble admirer of Madame Vigée le Brun's atelier years before?

She was not very favourably impressed by the gallant deputy, nor any the more so when she heard, next day, that the new ruler of Bordeaux had said, with a sardonic grin, as he rode between the trees of the "Allée des Quinconces," from which the October frosts had scattered the leaves, "The trees of Bordeaux need watering; we must nourish them with blood."

The first act of the Proconsul was to have the guillotine set up opposite the house he had chosen as a residence; nor did he leave it long idle. Whoever was suspected of royalist sympathies must put his head in the "national window," to quote the expression of the time. The ruthless bloodshed and

massacres began, and were carried forward as diligently as in Paris. Men, women, even children, followed each other by hundreds up the fatal steps, until Bordeaux, the town of wine, ran blood. Tallien, implacable, condemned innocent or suspected alike, without judgment or hesitation, his only regret being, as he said one day publicly, that he could not kill, with his own sword, all the aristocrats left in France. Hand in hand with extermination went bribery and spoliation; for the lackey's son was as venal as he was bloodthirsty.

On the 25th of November, Theodore Cabarrus's bank was visited, examined, and the silver in the house confiscated, on the pretext that it was marked with a crown. After the agents had retired, it was found that six hundred pounds in specie had been taken from the safe.

In Theresa's determined little brain a resolution had been formed. She vowed that she would not let things pass without a protest, and announced her intention of going to the Pro-consul herself to demand justice and retribution. It was a bold act in that time of terror, when the mere fact of being nobly born was in itself a death-warrant; but the Marquise de Fontenay was nothing if she was not courageous. Besides, the inaction and confinement of her life weighed on her restless spirit, always in search of sensation. Anything was better than the stagnation in which she was living. Perhaps the woman in Theresa told her that such beauty and charm as hers could disarm even the most savage hearts.

She was not mistaken. Tallien, flattered by the personal solicitation of a beautiful woman, had nothing to refuse, and promised a prompt restitution. He had not forgotten the smiling Marquise of Madame Vigée le Brun's studio. The grim Conventional dropped, for a moment, his harsh revolutionary language, to pay a compliment that savoured somewhat of the time of puffs and patches. Theresa went from her audience, flushed with triumph. She had bearded the lion in his den, and had found a lamb, of whose future protection

and interest she felt assured. However, a few nights afterwards, the Citoyenne Fontenay was awakened by the sound of bayonets hammering at her door. The police had come. They ordered her to dress immediately, and follow them to a carriage, which stood below, waiting to convey her to prison. Their route lay by the Place Nationale, where a shudder shook Theresa's delicate shoulders, for dark against the dawn stood the spectral shadow of the guillotine, awaiting the morrow's victims. A desperate desire for liberty and life seized the unfortunate girl, as the rude jailors pushed her, trembling with fear, into the dark cell, humid and foul as a sepulchre. In vain she strove, by closing her eyes, to shut from her mind the realization of her horrible surroundings. Long, long afterwards, she would remove her delicate, bare feet, ring laden, from her antique sandals, to show her admirers the marks left on the rosy toes by the teeth of the rats that infested the cells of the Prison of Hâ.

All night long she lay racking her brain to find a means of escape from a fate against which her determined spirit, her glorious body, and all the energy of her triumphant youth furiously rebelled. Tallien! Yes, Tallien! There was the gate of freedom; there the way of safety. She had seen a gleam in the Conventional's eyes, as he bowed her from his presence, that the experienced coquette could not mistake. Quick, turnkeys! pen and paper; a messenger! a messenger!

Two hours afterwards, voices and steps disturbed the silence of the prison corridor. They stopped before Theresa's door as she waited, her heart beating, breaking, almost in an agony of expectation. It was the deliverer! He had answered her desperate call! The ci-devant Marquise de Fontenay is at liberty; or, rather, she is dead; and Theresa Cabarrus steps again into the glory of the free sunlight. The man who had delivered her from her fate was a lackey; it was a lackey's payment he exacted in return. For he had imposed a condition—a condition so humiliating, that all the instincts of the

aristocrat recoiled from it with repugnance. Yet, in the other balance of the scale hung life; life, so sweet to the ardent nature of twenty. And she wished to live, to live, to live!! Love, supremacy, homage, adoration, all awaited her in the years to come. She had not the courage to forego the golden prizes she saw before her. On that very evening, Theresa took up her residence in the grim house overlooking the guillotine; and the powerful Proconsul held in his arms the most beautiful woman of her time.

Given the path into which she had turned, there was but one course to pursue. Theresa must play the Goddess of Liberty. The supple nature of the Southerner soon adapted itself to its new role. Bordeaux, astonished, saw Tallien, with the former Marquise de Fontenay at his side, drive through the streets in equipages whose luxury of appointment had in them nothing of Republican severity. Of the fêtes, galas, and rejoicings that celebrated the Republican victories, Theresa became the dazzling centrepiece. As she passed, dressed in the semi-Grecian style of the day, her fair neck and arms bare, her glossy, black hair crowned jauntily with a red, velvet, Phrygian bonnet, she seemed a very Venus.

If such public triumphs satisfied the insatiable vanity of the coquette, to the refined and educated aristocrat the reverse side of the medal was her daily intercourse with the coarse Radicals that gathered around Tallien's table. There she must listen to their rude sallies or ceaseless insults against the class from which she sprang, and to which all her sympathies were given. Tallien himself had been refined considerably by his desire to please the woman with whom he was as desperately in love as when he was a lad of 19. Every caprice of his mistress was gratified. Theresa realized her power; and, whatever her repugnance, she feigned submission, even love. Perhaps, after all, the fine looking young Conventional, with the prestige of his authority, was not very objectionable to a woman who had never been very fastidious in her choice of lovers.

The happiest days of Tallien's life were those he spent in his mistress's boudoir, which she had decorated and arranged with all the refined luxury to which she was accustomed. It was there that Theresa passed hours with her harp, her painting, or her modelling; for, like other fine ladies of her time, she dabbled in all the arts.

Under the benign influence of love, a change came over the Proconsul. The lists of his victims diminished. It began to be whispered abroad that Theresa's preponderant influence saved many a head which the Revolutionary Tribunals had condemned. Petitions and letters of supplication poured in upon the former Marquise de Fontenay. Undoubtedly, whatever faults she may have had, Theresa possessed a kind and generous heart, a hand always open to succour those in distress. Even at the greatest personal risk, she never hesitated to come to the rescue. She not only obtained quantities of passports, but saved a number of victims from the guillotine; nor was it with Tallien alone that the beautiful and gracious creature had influence and power. The ex-marquise was adored by all the band of savage "Sans-culottes" who surrounded her, and though she lived amid a tribe of ruffians, at least it was as their Queen. It would take too long to enumerate her acts of kindness at this time; for they were very many. The people of Bordeaux have remembered her by the charming sobriquet of "Our Lady of Succour," and, whatever sins or follies are imputed to her memory, none can deny that she was possessed of indomitable energy and courage, and of a kindness which she exercised without economy or thought of self.

But, in the midst of Theresa's reign of mercy, intrigue and jealousy were at work to undermine her power. At a supper party, one night, at Tallien's, a slim juvenile of some nineteen years, with a cherub face and insinuating manners, was brought up and presented to the mistress of the house. The new arrival was fresh from Paris, a friend and disciple of Robespierre, and the son of Julien, the deputy. He himself went by the classic

name of Mark Antony. Theresa, with her usual good grace, and moved by her insatiable desire to captivate, was full of amiable intentions, little dreaming that the candid brow of the young secretary hid a brain which was busily scheming a means for her overthrow.

A period of comparative peace had fallen upon Bordeaux. The Proconsul, notwithstanding his cupidity, had acquired a certain degree of popularity with the milder Republicans, thanks to Theresa's softening influence. On the other hand, the luxury in which he lived, his undoubted iniquity in all questions of personal interest, and his lax morals, had won him the unmitigated contempt of Robespierre.

Alarmed by the rumours he received through friends in Paris, Tallien determined to visit the capital, to defend himself from the attacks directed against him in the Assembly, by Maximilien and his partisans.

Theresa was left alone, glad to be delivered from the presence of her exacting slave, yet unwilling to take advantage of her freedom to escape. She did not love Tallien; but a sense of obligation, and, perhaps also, the dread of finding herself again alone and unprotected, bound her to his destiny for the moment. The days, preceding her lover's return, were passed agreeably enough, in company with a secretary of sixteen, Jean Guery by name, whom she had appropriated to her personal service, and whose youthful passion amused the coquette, pending more serious conquests.

Meanwhile Mark Antony Julien, indefatigable as a sleuth hound, was upon her track. After researches into Tallien's record of past iniquities, he succeeded in collecting such a mass of evidence against the Proconsul as would damn him, infallibly, and for ever, in the eyes of the Assembly. Theresa's blandishments had for once utterly failed to make a friend or ally of Robespierre's emissary, who was determined she should not play Cleopatra to a second Mark Antony. To the virtuous disciple of the Incorruptible, the open disregard of decorum

in which Madame Cabarrus—as she was now called—lived, was a slur upon the new Republic. Letter after letter was sent to Robespierre, denouncing the unworthy representative and his adulterous companion.

Meanwhile, all Tallien's advances towards Robespierre had been met with a discouraging coldness and open contempt, which showed the Representative of Bordeaux that, not only his position, but his very existence was in danger. Informed of the unfortunate turn affairs were taking, Theresa determined to start at once for Paris, and, on the 6th of May, loading the diligence with a few necessary belongings, she left Bordeaux with Jean Guery in attendance. The voyage was effected without incident. Near Blois, the postilions stopped to change horses. Theresa, seated on the roadside, was awaiting the moment to remount her carriage, when her attention was attracted by a tall, distinguished young man, who, with all the courtesy of the ancient "régime," approached, asking if he might be of some service, and inviting the beautiful traveller, before she proceeded on her way, to stop and take some slight refreshment in his father's château near by. The gracious host was the Count Joseph de Caraman, whom she was destined to meet again in after life.

On her arrival in Paris, Theresa received a letter sent by one of her friends in the Revolutionary party, warning her that the order for her arrest had been signed, and that two of Robespierre's most expert agents had been set upon her track.

The police were not long in discovering the imprudent beauty, who could never resist showing herself in public. While she slept she was awakened, as once before, at dead of night, by the familiar and terrible sound of heavy tramping feet at her door, while a voice cried to her sternly, "Open in the name of the Republic one and indivisible." Trembling, and half undressed, Theresa was pushed rudely, at the very bayonet's point, into a coach, that stood waiting. As they neared the

Place du Throne, her guardians forced her to pass her head through the window. There stood the same horrible shadow which she had so narrowly escaped a short time before, by the humiliating sacrifice of her person and dignity. "In three days time from now, Milady, you will be acting the principal part in yonder play," said one of her captors with a coarse laugh. With what dismay and what a horror of agony the words fell on Theresa's ears, she used to relate years afterwards. On her arrival at the prison, eight men undressed her, with scant ceremony. Her delicate body was thrust into a common, linen slip, her splendid black curls unpityingly shorn off, and the door of a cell again closed, with its iron shriek, upon Theresa's young and radiant beauty.

For five and twenty days she lay there, miserable and dejected, expecting each hour to be her last. And Tallien! Tallien! had he failed her? The dastard! She vowed to wreak a hundred vengeances on his head, should she ever escape. Tallien, indeed, had not forgotten her, but, though he loved her desperately, passionately, with all the elements of good there were in his venal and contemptible nature, he was powerless to help her.

Tallien himself was fighting for his life. He had obtained a promise that the Citoyenne Cabarrus should not be judged immediately, and with that assurance he must rest content for the moment. There was, indeed, no case against Theresa. The only intrigues she had indulged in were amorous ones, and her only compromising letters were love billets. They were shown to her lover. In them he read the proofs of her lightness and infidelity; a mortal blow to the unsuspecting Tallien. Yet even that rude awakening could not cure a passion that had root in his very soul. His destiny was to love Theresa with an adoration so absolute that nothing could change it. This passion was to cease only with his life. Surely, coarse, ill-bred, brutal as the man was, he had in him something that we must admire. It is not given to all mortals to be

capable of such a stupendous passion. It lent to Tallien's soul an element of greatness, and a power of suffering that forces our sympathy. We grow to pity, even, the instigator of the massacres of September, the tyrant of Bordeaux, the perpetrator of a hundred acts of fanatical violence.

To enable him to catch a glimpse of the woman he loved, Tallien managed to hire a garret near the prison, whence he could watch the prisoners during their short daily exercise. His one pleasure was to feast his eyes upon his idol. Even amongst her jailors, Theresa's beauty and all-conquering charm had soon won her friends. The rigour of the prison rules was relaxed in her favour, and her cell exchanged for a room into which some light and sun penetrated. Life in the prisons was not one of the least strange features of the Revolutionary Period. There were gathered the remnants of that aristocratic society which the Reign of Terror had disbanded. There only were to be found the courtesy, politeness and refinement of a former century, nor was its gallantry wanting. Amongst the prisoners, rules of precedence still held good, titles were used, and conventions of breeding and etiquette unforgotten.

But the uncertainty of life determined those who might die to-morrow, to enjoy, to the utmost, the few brief hours remaining. Intrigue, more often amorous than political, was the absorbing occupation. The gods had pity on these poor mortals, who were soon to have their youth cut off by the untimely knife of the guillotine. Cupid, who fears neither bolts nor bars, installed himself boldly in the crowded revolutionary prisons, and gave many a moment of oblivion to those whose hours on earth were counted.

Theresa found herself once more amongst the men and women of her own class. She heard again the soft-voiced compliment, the musical laughter of her social equals. Theresa Cabarrus, the mistress of the sanguinary Conventional, became once more the Marquise de Fontenay. In a heart essentially aristocratic, arose a bitter resentment against, and contempt

CONVENT DES CORDELIERS.

FACING PAGE 112.

for, the vulgar tyrant at whose side she had masqueraded under the Phrygian bonnet of a Goddess of Liberty. She determined, at least, to use him as an instrument. He was weak and sensual, and as clay in her dainty hands. But allegiance, loyalty to such a creature! she put the idea from her with derision.

Those within the prisons were not without news of what was passing outside. There was electricity in the air that portended storm. The prisoners gathered to discuss gravely their possible fate, for they felt that their lives hung in trembling scales. Theresa, burning with anger and impatience against her inactive and hesitating lover, determined to send to him a last, desperate appeal. "The prison director has just left me," she wrote, "he told me that to-morrow I would be summoned before the Tribunal, which means the scaffold. It is little like the dream that came to me last night. I dreamed that Robespierre was no more, and that the prisons had opened their doors to the innocent. Thanks to your contemptible and miserable cowardice, there will soon be no man left alive in France to put into execution and realise such a possibility." Without a word of tenderness she signed and sent the letter to Tallien.

He read it as he was preparing to enter the Assembly. The scathing words overcame his indecision, and aroused him to action. At all risks, all hazards, he must prove to the woman he loved that he was no coward, but a man, ready to do and dare. He must, he would deliver her, and be again her saviour and her lover.

Quivering under the lash of scorn, the crumpled paper still in his nervous hand, Tallien strode into the Convention. As he passed a friend, Gonfrilleau de Montaigu, he said firmly: "Come and watch the triumph of the friends of liberty. To-night, Robespierre will be no more."

The meeting began! St. Just, his beautiful, viper face fixed on Tallien, started an attack upon the Members of the Committee of Public Safety. Tallien, with an energy and bravado

that astonished the Assembly, interrupted the orator by saying that the time had passed for insinuation, that the Convention wanted proofs and facts. Let Robespierre and his satellites give them. "Robespierre," cried the orator, feeling his audience with him, "What is he? A Revolutionary renegade!" Robespierre rose, paling at the unexpected and violent attack. His voice was drowned in the clamour, and he stood uncertain where to turn for support. On that day, as it happened, most of his creatures were absent. For the first time the Assembly, which he had so dominated, escaped him. Tallien, like one possessed, mounted the Tribune, a poignard in his hand: "Citizens," he vociferated, "If you have not the courage to depose the tyrant, he will die by my hand." The deputies rose like one man, and a hundred voices cried, "Down, down with the tyrant!" There was no standing against the storm. Robespierre and his minions left the house precipitately. The day was won.

That night Robespierre's mangled body was carried, bleeding, to its judgment, and on the morrow he mounted the scaffold to which he had sent so many victims. The hyena had at last been conquered. The Reign of Terror was ended! and France, panting and surprised, looked gratefully towards the man who, by his simple daring, had overthrown the all-powerful despot.

Open, prison doors! Open, to let in light and liberty, to free the oppressed, to close again upon the oppressors! Tallien, the hero of the hour, the man who had delivered France, was acclaimed with wild enthusiasm by a whole frenzied population. But it was for one smile only that he waited, for one glance of appreciation from a pair of bright eyes, for one word murmured by soft lips. That was the prize he craved, and for which he had risked all, assuming a courage and energy foreign to his hesitating nature. It was not a patriot who overthrew Robespierre, and freed France from tyranny; it was a lover. The triumph was Theresa's. When, a few days afterwards, she appeared at the Opera, beside Tallien, radiantly brilliant in her youth and beauty, the audience rose to greet her with

cheers. The heroine of Thermidor accepted her rôle in all sincerity. She knew, indeed, that it was thanks to the lines penned by her dimpled hand that the destiny of France had been changed. As to Tallien, his jealousies were forgotten and forgiven. Theresa was about to become a mother. She was the woman he adored. The destinies of these two incongruous beings seemed interwoven; it was by mutual agreement that, on the 26th of December, 1794, the former Marquise de Fontenay became legally Madame Jean Lambert Tallien.

For a while Theresa was to reign as Queen of the strange, disorganised, though brilliant society of the Directory. Among her own personal possessions was a rustic farmhouse, called "La Chaumière," situated in the then uninhabited Avenue Montaigne. To this place the couple moved, fitting it with all the luxury dear to Theresa's heart; and here Tallien, the first man of the day, the hero of Thermidor, and his beautiful wife received all the Paris world of politics, finance, and fashion.

But Tallien was essentially a mediocre character; his unnatural burst of energy had been but a flash in a pan, inspired by his wife's scorn. He soon fell to the normal level of his own incapacities. Even in the circle of his receptions, it was the mistress of the house who drew, and held, the admiring crowds around her. The gloomy Conventional was left alone, and soon grew to be a mere cypher, almost a stranger in his own house. Sumptuously dressed, exquisitely graceful, seductive beyond words, Madame Tallien gathered all opinions to her side. The radiance of her victorious smile cleared the stormiest atmosphere into a sunshine of harmony; her salon was the Court of the Directory, in which she reigned supreme. More and more in the shadow, the master of the house was pushed into a corner. No one wanted him; no one cared for him. The lonely man's sole pleasures in life were his little daughter, Thermidor, named in memory of his triumph, and his resplendent wife, in whom his very spring of being was centred. The foppish young dandies of the Directory, who crowded the recep-

tions at the Chaumière, turned away their quizzing glasses from the instigator of the September massacres. The rising politicians passed by, almost unnoticed, the gaunt figure who was a living reminder of a time that each was anxious to forget.

Aristocrats were flocking back by every boat that landed. The country was sick of blood. France had had enough of storms and tears; she craved sunlight and laughter. The men of the Revolution had perished in the tempest, or had disappeared to give place to others.

Among the frequenters of the Talliens' receptions, one of the most assiduous was the Director Barras. His fine person, set off by the advantages of a handsome uniform, his lavish expenditure, the prestige of his position, made him the man of the hour, on whom all eyes were turned admiringly. Such an adorer was destined to knock, not in vain, at the open door of Theresa's heart. When Madame Tallien, leaning on the Director's arm, entered the salons of the Luxembourg, blazing with jewels and radiant in loveliness, the crowds made way for the splendid couple, and all but Tallien tacitly acknowledged in the triumphant Theresa, a Vice-Directress. Even Barras, coldly calculating as he was, was subjugated by the transcendent beauty of his mistress, and the Treasury of the Directory was opened to her grasping little hands.

On one of their drives together, Barras stopped his carriage at the door of a vast garden, in the Rue de Babylone. "What an enchanting retreat!" cried Theresa, "he is a fortunate being who inhabits such a paradise." The handsome Director took a key from his embroidered waistcoat and handed it gallantly to his companion. She did not refuse it.

Yet, with all her vices, follies, thoughtlessness, and wasteful extravagance, Madame Tallien's naturally amiable heart and generous nature won her warm friends. In becoming Our Lady of Thermidor, she had not ceased to be Our Lady of Succour. If she no longer had opportunities to save heads, she was able and willing to use her influence in a thousand acts of kind-

ness to those around her; for to oblige was her keenest pleasure. One day a friend brought to her reception a sallow, hungry-looking officer, in a coat a size too large for his narrow shoulders. Struck by the young man's magnificent eyes and the intelligence and depth of his remarks, Madame Tallien inquired his name. He was called Napoleon Bonaparte, was a lieutenant of artillery, and came of a poor, though noble Corsican family. Being but an officer in attendance, he must wear what was given him—hence his shabby appearance. The next day young Bonaparte had an order from the War Office for a new uniform. All doors opened to Theresa's gracious requests.

With the fair, Creole widow, Madame de Beauharnais, Madame Tallien was on intimate terms, and had rendered Josephine a signal service in getting her confiscated property restored. Scandal even whispered that the two beautiful young women shared Barras' affection. The situation, however, gave rise to no jealousies, and they were, and remained in after life, firmly attached.

So the years passed. Meanwhile, poor Tallien fell lower and lower; he had no friends, no influence, no ambition. The masters of the hour disdained the poor intriguer, the abandoned husband, the unsuccessful politician. Moral and social failure precipitated physical collapse: the handsome Proconsul of '93 became a cadaverous, shambling wreck, with sunken eyes and hollow cheeks. Under failing health, his temper grew captious, and he was subject to violent nervous attacks. The unfortunate man knew that he had been betrayed by the woman he so persistently adored. He realised that he had become an object of derision and repulsion; yet he loved Theresa still. To see her, to live near her, he was willing to sacrifice the last remnants of his manly dignity.

Through the influence of the rising hero, General Bonaparte, Madame Tallien obtained an appointment for her husband in the army of Egypt, which she forced him to accept. She was left in Paris, freed, at last, from the presence which had grown

so odious to her, and able to pursue the life of pleasure and conquest, which to the inveterate coquette was as necessary as the air she breathed. By the post, which brought her daily a dozen declarations from her lovers, the exile's letters came regularly. In them he spoke of their past, feigned to ignore her present, and made fond projects for the future.

Unsympathetic as Tallien was, corrupt, base, and degenerate as we know him to have been, yet when we read these pitiful appeals there arises in our hearts a profound commiseration for the wretched man. Under all the phrases in which he drew pictures of his return to his happy home, to the love of his wife and daughter, under all his protestations of passion and reiterations of gratitude for his wife's kindness to him, we hear the under song of the man's broken heart, ringing a funeral knell over the only happiness life could hold for him. We picture the poor brute in his hot tent, under the shadow of the Egyptian pyramids, writing the letters that were never to receive an answer, pouring out all his heart upon paper. Amid the burning sands of the desert, there passed before his hungry eyes a vision of the cool garden of the dear Chaumière, and of Theresa, in her diaphanous muslins, her dainty feet thrust into antique sandals, her dark curls caught by strings of pearls into a Grecian knot, her luminous eyes sparkling, her scarlet lips opening in a greeting to the admirers that flocked around her. Surely, in such moments, the Marquise de Fontenay was revenged upon the man who had won her by a humiliating bargain. She had given him back the cup of gall, and he must drink it to its dregs.

Meanwhile, from success to triumph, the beautiful syren moved. Her intrigue with the Director closed by Barras introducing her complacently to a rich financier, Ouvrard by name, whose resources were better able to stand Theresa's reckless assaults; for she spent thousands on her costumes, which were regal in their richness and quantity. The news of Tallien's return from Egypt left her untroubled. This time she was determined to let no question of sentimental pity interfere with

the dissolution of a tie that had become onerous. Tallien was not received by his wife. He bowed to her irrevocable decision.

Theresa had left the Chaumière, with her children—for several had been born during Tallien's absence—and was living in the house which Barras had given her. With Ouvrard's fortune she was free to indulge in all her caprices. In her new home Madame Cabarrus—for so she had called herself again after her divorce—held open house, receiving all the most prominent men in Paris, patronising letters, the arts, and the sciences, and acting the role of a Muse. Yet, upon her bed of roses, Theresa found a thorn, in the coldness with which the aristocratic society of the Faubourg St. Germain avoided the ex-Marquise de Fontenay. Even the Salons of the Tuileries were closed by Napoleon to the woman he had once courted and admired, and who had never ceased to be a friend of his wife. It was the cause of more than one domestic scene; for Josephine was unwilling to abandon the confidant and companion of her days of adversity. But the Emperor was inexorable: Ouvrard's mistress should not enter the charmed circle of the Imperial Court. Theresa tried a hundred ruses, and exercised all her influence to gain the Emperor's good graces. It was in vain; and she must needs, at last, resign herself to the inevitable, and limit her ambitions to shining in her own drawing-rooms.

It was at this time that the ranks of her admirers were swelled by a new comer—the young gentleman of the halt before Blois, heir to the Princely Crown of Carman-Chimay. Though no longer in its spring, Theresa was still in the glorious summer of her life. She captivated all who approached her, and none more than the Comte de Caraman, who had never forgotten the exquisite traveller of eleven years before. Cupid is proverbially blind, and it hardly required all Theresa's charm and tact to persuade her ardent admirer that his lady had been the victim of circumstances during her varied career of

adventure. He offered her his heart, hand, and crown, and the 18th of July, 1805, Theresa descended the steps of the Mairie of the 8th Arrondissement, lawful Princess of Caraman-Chimay, and a member of that ancient aristocracy from which she had so long been excluded. Paris did not call on the happy couple, but Theresa, during her troubled career, had learned enough philosophy to realise that "all comes to those who wait."

To Tallien, living alone and miserably, the news was brought. "She can call herself Princess Chimère," he cried bitterly, "history will know her but as Madame Tallien."

From this time forward, Theresa settled down into a peaceful sunset of prosperity; yet, before we leave her, we would evoke one scene in her strange life, that reunited, once again, for an hour, "Our Lady of Thermidor," and the unhappy man who had so long and hopelessly adored her with all the energy of his dark nature.

It was in April, 1815. Thermidor, the daughter born to Madame Tallien after the events of the 9th of Thermidor, had grown into a beautiful girl of nineteen. She was to marry the Count de Narbonne-Petit and, notwithstanding the little desire that the Princesse de Caraman-Chimay and her noble family had of seeing Tallien, it was difficult not to invite a father to his own daughter's wedding ceremony. When the Conventioner appeared, bent, shabby, haggard, and uncouth, amid that fashionable assembly, the guests shrunk away as from a leper. The very name of the "Septembriseur" was fraught with terror. The young bride herself turned with repugnance from the father she no longer knew, nor recognised. He was the skeleton at the feast. The only person present who remained unembarrassed, and greeted the unlucky man with quiet politeness, was the astonishing Theresa. Before her tranquil indifference, the abandoned husband suffered keener mortification and chagrin than from all the ill-disguised repugnance of those around him.

The ceremony ended, Tallien stood alone and uncertain upon the church steps. The Princesse de Chimay, whose

carriage was waiting to convey her to the wedding breakfast, turned to her former lover and, with a smile, offered him a seat in her berlin. Timid and trembling, he accepted; and, once again, in an equipage of gala, Tallien found himself seated beside the woman he adored. Once again his fond eyes could see, his hand touch her. A vision must have crossed his mind, of Theresa, in her youth and beauty, riding by his side down the crowded thoroughfares, her black ringlets crowned with the little red velvet cap of liberty, her dazzling shoulders draped lightly in an antique peplum, while the enthusiastic populace shouted their names to the echoes. Tallien lent an unheeding ear to the polite commonplaces of the Princess; his thoughts were back in the golden days of their adventurous past, when both were living, beneath radiant skies, the astonishing romance of their youth. The carriage stopped, all too soon, awakening him from his dream. At the door of his house, the Prince de Chimay waited to escort his wife to the wedding feast. The hand he encountered was Tallien's, and the courtesy of a grand gentleman exacted that the princely host should invite the unwelcome guest to enter. He did so, and placed him in the honoured seat, beside "their" wife. Theresa's amiability and unconcern never failed during that strange wedding feast, but, to all alike, it was a relief when the time came to withdraw. There are some situations that not even the greatest tact can render supportable.

Tallien never saw his wife again. The inhabitants of the village of Chimay told tales of meeting a gloomy, uncouth stranger, who would come sometimes and prowl around the gate of the "château," waiting as though he wished to see its occupants. It was the once arrogant Proconsul of '93, who, after his fruitless pilgrimages, would journey back to Paris, more dejected, more miserable each time. He lived poorly, wanting often the barest necessities of life, which he would procure for himself by the sale of some volume from his once voluminous library. One day, during the reign of Louis XVIII.,

the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Baron Pasquier, brushed up against a needy-looking man, shabbily dressed, who was driving a bargain for a package of books he had under his arm.

"Monsieur Tallien!" said the Minister surprised.

"I do not try to hide myself, sir," answered the ex-president of the Convention, proudly.

There was an embarrassed silence, as Pasquier cast a look upon the books Tallien had brought to sell.

"But," cried Pasquier, "this is a collection of your journal, 'L'Ami des Citoyens,' and I have been looking for it for years."

"Then it is my good fortune to be able to offer it to you," replied Tallien.

The Minister took the volumes with some confusion. He did not dare to offer payment, yet he saw that their donor was in dire need.

"I shall have the honour of coming to thank you in your lodgings to-morrow," he said, as Tallien bowed and withdrew.

That night the Minister told the story to Louis XVIII. The King listened curiously, with a smile on his face. It was an opportunity for a subtle revenge on the man who had sent Louis XVI. to the scaffold.

"Pasquier," cried the King, "to-morrow you will carry Monsieur Tallien one hundred louis from my private purse."

Tallien accepted the pension; he was not one to refuse money, be its source what it might. But he did not live long to enjoy it. A few months afterwards he died, unattended and alone, save for his old servant. Not a soul followed the modest coffin to the cemetery, and the hero of Thermidor passed from off the face of the earth, unmourned, unhonoured, and almost forgotten.

Theresa's declining years were more fortunate. Surrounded by her children, interested in good works and educational schemes, she saw her beauty fade without too much regret. Freed by the Marquis de Fontenay's opportune death, she was

enabled to have her marriage duly sanctified by the Church of Rome, and the aristocratic and exclusive society of the Faubourg St. Germain at last pardoned and took to its bosom its long-erring daughter. In her old age she loved to relate the romance and drama of her youth. The very day before she died, in 1835, she said to her son, Dr. Cabarrus, "What a life mine has been! Has it not, indeed, been a dream?"

Posterity need not be more severe on Theresa than her contemporaries. Her qualities of heart outweighed her lightness of conduct. She shone out of the lurid night of the Revolution as a star of brilliant beauty. Her charm and fascination come as a refreshing respite from the horrors of the Reign of Terror, which she, more than any other, was instrumental in ending.

STAIRCASE, 29 QUAI DE BOURBON, WHERE MADAME TALLIEN LIVED AS A GIRL.

CHAPTER VIII

ALONG THE QUAIS

The wall built by Philippe Auguste, three metres high, "and mighty strong and mighty thick," so that a cart could drive upon its broad top, advanced to the edge of the river, along what is now the Rue Mazarin. It was terminated by a tower that looked towards the Seine, where the present south front of the Institut de France stands, and was named after Philippe Hamelin, Prévôt of Paris, at the time of its construction, and afterwards called la Tour de Nesle—a Seigneur de Nesle having built a château, forming a part of the Louvre, on the ground now occupied by the Mint.

Legend, that fantastic sister of History, is often mistaken for her sedater twin, and, as the years roll by, it is not easy for the antiquary or the historian to disentangle fact from the heap of fictions under which it lies buried. The Tour de Nesle has served poets and romancers, from time immemorial, as the background for tragic and dramatic events, and became a name fraught with such mysterious terror, that the good citizens of Paris crossed themselves at the mere mention of it. A Princesse de Bourgogne was reported to have dwelt here, luring her gallants within the dark walls, where, after scenes of the wildest

orgy, they were seized, tied in a sack, and precipitated, by a subterranean channel, into the current of the river beneath. It is the marvellous that always succeeds best in capturing the public imagination, and hundreds of victims were reported to have so perished, paying with their lives for a night of adventurous folly. Probably there was some basis of truth in the story, grossly exaggerated by generations of credulous listeners; yet it is no more than a legend, and as such must be taken. It is certain that Jeanne de Bourgogne, wife of Philippe le Long, inhabited the Hotel de Nesle during the eight years of her widowhood; but research fails to attribute any such crimes to her memory. She died in 1329. Benvenuto Cellini also lived and worked there during the years he spent in Paris in the service of the King.

The Tour de Nesle and its adjacent château were then surrounded by vast pasture land, through which passed a canal known as "la petite Seine," following the present line of the Rue Bonaparte. Towards the south extended a field called le Petit Pré, occupied by booths and rustic cabarets, and frequented by the students and their gay companions, known as "les Vierges Folles." On the west was the celebrated "Pré aux Clercs," which the Clerks of Parliament had chosen as their promenade ground, and for the representations of the pageants in which they excelled. Large crowds, drawn by the wit and joviality of these open-air spectacles, came to the "Pré aux Clercs" from across the river; wandering merchants erected booths there, and it gradually grew into a permanent fair, at which the townspeople gathered to patronise the taverns, and merry jousts and games that abounded. On summer evenings all classes would flock to the "Pré aux Clercs," arriving by the "bac" or ferry, established in 1550, the present Rue du Bac being then but a pathway leading to the ferry. But, at the hour when the "couvre feu" rang out its warning knell, all peaceful citizens hurried home; for, as night fell, the neighbouring Faubourg St. Germain, an outlying village of evil repute, would

pour its uncertain population of brigands and noisy ruffians into the Pré aux Clercs. Indeed, it was from this disorderly and often murderous crew, that the Quai Malaquais took its name; Malaquest being a derivative of "mauvaise compagnie," and a term for all sorts of roughs and outlaws.

In 1557 the Reformers chose the Pré aux Clercs as a meeting place, in which to preach their doctrine, and sing the Psalms of David, set to the popular airs of the day, and translated, for the first time, into French verse, by Clement Marot. The Parisians, then, as now, the most curious population in the world, and always ready to gather in crowds at the slightest provocation, assembled "en masse" at the unusual spectacle. The Catholic clergy took alarm at the wonderful popularity the Reformers were gaining; for the beauty of the Psalms electrified the listening crowds, and the new religion acquired converts daily. The Church saw, with alarm, its power menaced; to sing the Psalms in a language which every one could understand was pronounced a sedition, and an open incitement to rebellion and civil war. Pain of death was the penalty paid by man, woman, or child, who dared to sing a Psalm in public; and the Reformers were forbidden to gather in any public square to hold their meetings. The arbitrary severity of the fathers of the ancient faith was seconded by the King, Henri III., a narrow bigot. But it was too late to stop the impetuous current of opinion; for the reform was led by men of austere and remarkable virtue, and numbered among its adherents some of the first names of France, such as Coligny and Condé, and three noble and honoured women, Marguerite de Navarre, Jeanne d'Albret, mother of Henry IV., and the beautiful Duchesse de Ferrare; while, amongst the bourgeoisie, Jean Goujon, Clement Marot, du Cerceau, Ambroise Paré, and scores of others, were ardent Protestants. The people themselves, restless and discontented under the tyranny of the Mother Church, greeted the new movement with a sympathy which the arbitrary measures of the Catholic clergy served rather to stimulate than to suppress.

BOOKSTALLS ON THE QUAY.

FACING PAGE 126.

The Huguenots, forbidden to congregate in public, met in private, in the houses near the Pré aux Clercs. Their first Synod was held in the Rue Visconti, the Reformers choosing, by preference, the quarter of St. Germain, where they were less observed, and felt in greater security than in Paris itself. On the fatal night of St. Bartholomew, to prevent them from being warned in time of the massacre about to take place, the ferry, as well as all the boats that habitually carried passengers backwards and forwards across the Seine, were removed down the river. When the slaughter began, the Huguenots, finding themselves cut off and penned in the city, jumped into the river by hundreds, hoping in that way to escape. It was the more unfortunate of these desperate swimmers that Charles IX., spying from his window in the Louvre by the early morning light of the 25th of August, 1572, shot down with his own fowling piece, as though they had been so many bobbing wild ducks.

During the siege of Paris by Henry IV., the Pré aux Clercs was used as a camping ground by the Huguenot armies, and, after the establishment of peace, Marguerite de Valois built herself a palace there, surrounded by a spacious park, extending as far as the Rue du Bac. Marguerite died in 1615, after naming the young Louis XIII. as heir, but her numerous creditors seized the property, which was divided and sold in lots, except a space planted with elm trees, which was left as a public walk. It soon became the haunt of all the dubious inhabitants of the quarter, male and female, as well as a rendezvous for duellists, many notorious and fatal encounters taking place there. In 1639, the last remaining vestiges of the Gardens disappeared to make way for the Rues de Verneuil and de Beaume, The celebrated Pré aux Clercs has been sung in the opera that bears its name——

"Ces rendez-vous de noble compagnie
Se donnent tous en ce charmant séjour,
Tout doucement on y passë la vie,
En célébrant le champagne et l'amour."

On a winter day of 1661, twelve of the greatest medical authorities in France rose, with grave faces, from the table, around which they had assembled. The object of their consultation, the most important man in the kingdom, waited in an adjoining room to hear their verdict. With emaciated face, and tall, stooping form, Mazarin stood ready to receive the doctors, who filed silently in, one after another, each unwilling to break the fatal news. But the man with whom they had to deal had not studied physiognomy for nothing, through the long years of his astute career. He read his condemnation, twelve times over, in the averted eyes about him, and quietly, without emotion, spoke it himself. The doctors had hardly left his presence, before Mazarin, son of the Church though he was, turned his thoughts back to the world he was leaving, and began preparations by which to dispose of the immense wealth he had accumulated, since, as a needy, young Italian priest, he had first entered the service of France in the shadow of his predecessor, the great Cardinal.

To each of the seventeen Italian nieces who had come from Italy at his bidding, to be married to the first nobles of the kingdom, Mazarin left a colossal fortune; to each of the two queens, a handful of diamonds; and vast portions to servitors, parasites and retainers. But the vain Italian wished to have his name perpetuated in the land of his adoption, and decided to leave an endowment to build a College that would be called the College Mazarin, and so remain through all time. For this purpose, therefore, he appropriated a large sum, and named the young king as his executor. The scheming Italian passed away on the 9th of March, 1661, but disputes, disagreements, and hesitations as to a choice of locality, prevented the plan from being put into execution immediately. It was years before Levau, with the aid of the architect Lambert, finally erected the present Palais Mazarin, which now serves for the sittings of the various Academies which form the "Institut de France." The Bibliothèque Mazarine, begun by the Cardinal's own collection,

PALAIS MAZARIN, NOW THE SEAT OF THE ACADEMIE FRANCAISE.

was augmented, at the time of the Revolution, by the acquisition of one million, five hundred thousand books, part of numerous private libraries, confiscated in 1794 from the "Emigrés."

In No. 1, Quai Malaquais, we may find the type of a private residence of the time of Louis XIII. The architect, Visconti, lived and died there.

Close beside it, graceful and harmonious, with the red brick front and grey stone facings dear to the architects of the 17th century, is a house which had the dubious honour of being "condemned to death" by the Convention, in 1793. Buzot, the enthusiastic young Girondin député, who had inspired a passion in the patriotic heart of Madame Roland, lodged at 3, Quai Malaquais. When the milder and juster republicans were swept aside and overthrown by the violent revolutionists, with Robespierre at their head, the party of the "Gironde" fell, its members being forced to fly for their lives. Buzot, one of the most prominent and noblest of the young "Girondins," reached Bordeaux, but, finding public opinion adverse to him in the south, where the revolution was raging with even greater violence than in Paris; he escaped to Brittany. There, tracked by the emissaries of the Revolutionary Tribunal, he fled from hiding place to hiding place, until, overtaken by cold, hunger, and privation, he died miserably in a deserted cave. The Convention decided to have the house in which he had lived razed to the ground, and to inscribe on its ruins "Here dwelt King Buzot." The 9th of Thermidor saved the charming old mansion from such an unjust and ridiculous fate. It was inhabited, in 1820, by Humboldt, the geologist.

At No. 5 (the Hotel de Bérulle) dwelt Maurice de Saxe, the victor of Fontenay, lover of the beautiful Adrienne Lecouvreur, who was supposed to have been poisoned by the jealousy of the Duchesse de Bouillon, a rival in the affections of the Maréchal de Saxe. The body of Adrienne Lecouvreur was carried from

her house near by at dead of night, and secretly buried by a few devoted friends, in a deserted corner of the Faubourg, on the site of No. 13, Bd. St. Germain. The house in which the actress breathed her last was 21, Rue Visconti, where Racine also died, and where two other celebrated comediennes, Mlle. Clarion and Mlle. de la Champmeslé, afterwards lived.

9, Quai Malaquais, now occupied by the "Ecole des Beaux Arts," was built from an ancient manor. It served as Ministry of War at the end of the 18th century. The hall in which the exhibitions of the School are annually held, is on the site of a hotel given by Mazarin to one of his nieces, Marie Anne Martinozzi, married to the Prince de Conti. In 1775, the occupant was the Duchesse de Mazarin, a daughter of the Duc d'Aumont, a very beautiful woman, who died from tight-lacing, although she had posed for a statue of Venus. During the years of the Revolution, the house changed hands, and when Savary, Duc de Rovigo, came into its possession, the statue of the Duchesse was found in a garret, and made its reappearance to serve as a decoration for the antichamber. It was here that General Mallet, accompanied by General Lahorie, came to present Savary with a forged order deposing him from his office of Minister of Police.

Mallet's plot merits more than a passing mention, for, had he succeeded, he would have changed the world's history. Claude Francois Mallet was born in 1754, and like so many of his compatriots, in 1791, enlisted, served with distinction, and became a General of the Republican, afterwards the Imperial, Armies. Mallet, though a valiant soldier of Napoleon's Legions, was an ardent Republican, and, as such, became suspected by the Emperor, who, as a measure of prudence, had him incarcerated in 1808. Profiting by the liberty which his exchange into a private asylum left him, and by Napoleon's prolonged absence in Russia, General Mallet organised an elaborate conspiracy which came within an ace of succeeding, and all but overthrew the Imperial Government.

He induced the Generals, Guidal and Lahorie, and a certain number of discontents to enter with him in the plot. They forged a "Senatus Consult," which declared Napoleon and his family to be deposed from the throne, and named a committee of five to exercise executive power, with General Mallet himself, as Governor of Paris, at their head. Escaping from his confinement during the night of the 23rd of October, Mallet visited the various barracks of Paris, where he circulated among the troops the news of Napoleon's death. He surprised the Civil authorities by presenting his papers, drove to the Minister of Police, and showed him a forged order depriving him of his office, and naming Lahorie in his place. He then ordered the astonished Savary to follow him to prison, which strangely enough, without the slightest resistance, Napoleon's Minister of Police prepared to do. The plan worked as if by magic, and the audacious conspiracy was nearly a complete success when a simple officer frustrated it by insisting on seeing proofs of what was told him. Mallet, annoyed at so unexpected an interruption from such a humble quarter, lost his temper, and, drawing his pistol, fired point blank upon the officer in question, Commandant Doucet; but the latter was too quick, seized Mallet by the collar, disarmed him, and the strange comedy came to a dramatic end.

No time was lost by the frightened authorities in judging the culprits, for all felt more or less compromised by the readiness with which they had fallen in with his plans. General Mallet and his companions were tried the next day and found guilty of high treason. "Who are your accomplices?" asked the Judge. "All of you, if I had succeeded," answered the unlucky General boldly. Mallet was condemned to be shot the following day. He heard his sentence with perfect equanimity, and only asked that, in consideration of his past services to the nation, he might give the command to fire to the soldiers who were to execute him. As they lifted their muskets to take aim, the General's practised eye discovered a want of unison

in their movement, which he reproved, ordering them to repeat it properly, and with the word "Fire!" on his lips, he fell, pierced by the bullets of twenty muskets.

At the corner of the Rue des Saints Péres was stationed the ferry, that served, in olden times, as a means of transport to those who wished to cross the river lower than the Pont Neuf, the only bridge then existing.

One evening, late, King Henry of Navarre, simply dressed and accompanied by but two gentlemen of his retinue, was returning to the Louvre after a long day's hunt in the forest of Montmorency. It was in 1598, and the Peace of Vervins had but recently been signed. Seeing that the boatman who was rowing them over the ferry had not recognised him, the King, who always loved to hear the frankly expressed opinion of his people, asked the ferryman what he thought of the newly-gained peace that France was enjoying for the first time in so many years. "My faith," remarked the ferryman, tugging at his oars, "I do not know much about peace, but what I do know is that rates and duties have increased on everything in the Kingdom, until even this poor barque pays such a heavy tax for its right to cross the river that it is all I can do to earn the scantiest living."

"And the King," asked Henry, "Is he not going to set all such things right for his people?"

"Pooh, Pooh!" replied the boatman, "the King, why, he is a good enough devil; but, look you, he has a mistress who needs so many jewels and fine dresses that there's no end to it, and it is we poor people who have to pay for them; and," he added slyly, "if she were but true to him—but she has a score of lovers."

The King, who had begun to laugh, looked thoughtful, and the next day ordered the ferryman to be brought to the Louvre, where he was sitting surrounded by his Court. He stepped aside, and calling the lovely Duchesse de Beaufort to him, bade the boatman repeat what he had said the previous

evening, which the man did, much to the mortification of the King's mistress, who grew so furious at what she heard that she cried out to Henry that the man must be taken and hung, or at least soundly whipped. But Henry, if an ardent lover, was also no poor philosopher.

"What folly!" he said, good-naturedly; "Here is a poor serf whom misery and overwork have put into a bad humour. We must put him into a good one again, and right the wrongs of Fortune, and I guarantee you that he cheers lustily enough in future for Henry and the beautiful Gabrielle D'Estrées."

When the ferryman left the palace, it was with the franchise of his barque, and a purse full of gold, and, after this, there was no more loyal subject in France than the boatman of the Louvre Ferry.

QUAI VOLTAIRE

The houses on the Quai Voltaire evoke a galaxy of distinguished names. No. 1 was the Hôtel de Braqueville, and, afterwards of the Maréchal de Tessé; Nos. 3 and 5, the residence of the Ambassador of Germany, in the 8th century. In No. 9, Louise Renée de Keroual, whom Charles II. of England had created Duchess of Portsmouth, came to close her adventurous life in bigoted old age, surrounded by the magnificent collection of paintings she had brought from England, a present from her royal lover. The house passed through many hands; amongst its other occupants were J. B. Gluck, an ancestor of the composer, Fouché, Napoleon's minister, and the painter Ingres.

At No. 14 lived the tragedian, Talma, of whom Napoleon was so enthusiastic an admirer that he said: "If I were not Napoleon, I would rather be Talma than any living man."

At the corner of the Rue de Beaune remains the house in which Voltaire died. It was built by Monsieur de Bragelonne, a Trésorier of Louis XIV., and was owned, at the end of the 18th century, by the Marquis de Villette, a friend of Voltaire's, to whom, notwithstanding Villette's reputation of being a confirmed

roué, he had married his adopted child, Renée Philibert de Vauricour, a young girl of a poor but noble family of Gex, whose beauty and sweetness of disposition had won her the gentle name of "Belle et Bonne."

It was to these friends that the great poet philosopher came, when, after an almost continuous exile of forty years, he returned to France. Paris acclaimed him with frenzy, and all classes of society flocked to welcome the Patriarch of Ferney, even though he lodged in a house whose master, the Marquis de Villette, was looked upon askance for his reputation of libertinage and his anti-religious ideas. The great American, Franklin, brought his grandson to be blessed by the man of genius. Voltaire, putting his hand on the child's head, said: "God and Liberty! I can give you no nobler words." For each and all the Patriarch had an appropriate word; a smile, a tear, or a bon mot, according to circumstances. His mind had never been clearer or more penetrating, his wit had never seemed more dazzlingly brilliant, yet his body was racked with pain, and he was already a doomed man.

It was not the first time Voltaire had inhabited the house on the corner of the Quai and the Rue de Beaune—thirty years before he had sojourned there as the guest of Madame de Bernières, in whom—so scandal whispered—he had found not only a passionate admirer, but a most tender friend. Since then much was changed. The old France of the poet's youth was rapidly evolving into the new France of '89, and none had been more instrumental than Voltaire in the mighty evolution. At the first rumours of the great man's illness, crowds gathered beneath the windows, to get news of him. Death, which he had feared so bitterly during his long life, had overtaken him suddenly. He breathed his last, sitting upright in an armchair, near the swiftly flowing river and its moving life, in the centre of the Paris he loved, of whose faults he was so conscious, and of which he so truthfully represented the restless, brilliant spirit of progress and perpetual change.

As the end seemed to be imminent, the Government, alarmed at the enthusiasm which the hero's funeral honours would be certain to awake in the population, had arranged with a relative of Voltaire's, l'abbé Mignot, to bury the philosopher who had so systematically opposed the Church. It was agreed that the body should be transported secretly to Champagne. At midnight, the dead man, clothed in a dressing gown, his head and face hidden beneath an immense nightcap, was placed in a coach drawn by six horses. Straps secured the body in an upright position, and a servant was seated opposite to watch through the strange vigil of the long drive. In a carriage behind, followed his devoted friends, the Marquis de Villette and his wife; also two official delegates. "Belle et Bonne" was in tears for the loss of the man who had always been to her the gentlest and kindest of parents.

We can picture that grim cortège passing out of the gateway of the Hotel in the Rue de Beaune, turning the Quai, and crossing the river, on its ghostly voyage. Even the corpse of the mighty cynic was judged dangerous; and the authorities trembled at the power it could exercise. And so, a smile on his thin lips, still now for ever, no more to utter the biting sarcasms, the cutting ironies, or noble words of free and developed thought, the great Voltaire rode away from his good city of Paris, bound upon the last, long exile of the restless spirit. His work was done! The ancient monarchy, with its old creeds and methods, was shaken to its core. The unpitying philosopher of Ferney might pass from a world he had done so much to change; it was no longer his shrivelled mummy that was dangerous, it was the whole system of living thought which he left behind him. Surely, his eternal smile can never have been more cynical; for he knew now he could watch with all-seeing eyes the storm that was gathering dark on the horizon, could look down upon the stark body that was hurried furtively away at dead of night, and could also see it, after many years, returning, blown back by the mighty hurricane, surrounded with pomp,

amid the delirious shouts, the frantic and enthusiastic worship of a whole frenzied population; borne back with honours innumerable, to take its place in the Pantheon of regenerated France, where, not the kings among men, but the kings among minds were to be laid for their long rest.

At the excessive honour, as at the useless slight, Voltaire, the philosopher, would have smiled as sardonically, as enigmatically. It is not around his splended mausoleum that his ghost stalks; it is along the banks of the river where he walked so often; it is along the Quai bearing his name and his image, beside which he lived, loved, and died.

For years, the Marquis de Villette left untenanted the room in which Voltaire died; then time and many changes scattered the pious relics. Arsène Houssaye occupied the house long afterwards, and wrote there, perhaps from the very room in which the poet spent his last hours, the book entitled "Le Roi Voltaire."

At the opposite corner of the street stands the Hôtel de Mailly. The Duc de Mailly Nesle, who built it, married a grand-niece of Mazarin, of whom more than one gallant anecdote is told. The Marquis de Richelieu inspired her with such a passion, that, hearing he had forsaken her for Madame de Polignac, she challenged her rival to a duel in the then wild and deserted Bois de Boulogne. They fought with pistols, and Madame de Mailly was wounded in the shoulder. It was this same Marquise de Mailly who was reputed to have been the first love of Louis XV. He did not long remain faithful, and deserted her for her second sister, by whom he had a son, who, from his likeness to the King, his father, was called "Le Demi Louis." This sister, the Countess de Vatimesnil, was poisoned, it was supposed, by Cardinal Fleury, jealous of the influence she was gaining over her lover. She was replaced in her turn by a third sister, who insisted on reigning alone in the affections of him whom his subjects had dubbed "Louis le Bien Aimé." Madame de Mailly was accordingly banished from

Court, and the Parisians, as usual, celebrated the episode in a song,

"J'al vu la Mailly tout en pleurs,
Voilà ce que c'est d'avoir des sœurs."

The poor Marquise de Mailly finished her life as a religious devotee. When she died, in 1751, it was found that she wore, hidden under her dress, a shirt of horsehair, as a penance for a past she bitterly repented. The Hôtel de Mailly was often frequented by the poet Leconte de Lisle, at the time when it was occupied by Victor Considérant, the editor of a review called "La Phalange," in which de Lisle published most of his celebrated poems. The poet would pass hours dawdling along the bookstalls of the Quais, his head bent over a volume, until, throwing it down, with a gesture of disdain and a shrug of his shoulders, expressive of all the contempt he felt for the book and its author, he would pick up and lose himself in another.

Let us not leave the Quais without a look at the old bookstalls, where lie the rows of dusty brown volumes over which de Lisle, and so many of France's poets, painters and philosophers have pondered.

To wander along, with the sparkling river beneath us, to finger the musty pages in search of an unexpected treasure; what lover of Paris has not so spent charmed hours? Perhaps he has been lucky enough to fall upon a coveted prize, has bought it for a few pennies, and hurried away with it under his arm, trying to look indifferent, while still under the eyes of the ancient bookseller with his spectacles and his duster, walking up and down before his wares. Once out of sight, the delighted purchaser, unable longer to resist, has crooned over his bargain, lost deep in the pages of some whilom writer, forgetting the crowds that in the lessening light pass on busy errands as the setting sun brightens the face of the river into a stream of burnished copper, and transforms into fiery dragons' eyes, all the windows along the old Quais.

Surely, it is not Voltaire's cynical ghost alone that stalks the banks of the classical river. It is haunted by a hundred mysterious phantoms, whose life-endeavours lay there in the books that line the grey stone parapets with a multi-coloured record of the thoughts, dreams, and fancies of generations of the children of the Seine.

THE SEINE BELOW PARIS

FOUNTAIN, RUE GARANCIERE.

CHAPTER IX

OLD STREETS AND CORNERS

If we would picture to ourselves the Paris of a century or so ago, we must imagine a network of narrow, winding streets, filled with a motley procession of jostling townspeople, clattering men at arms, monks, friars, and priests, while, at every corner, there met the eye the most pitiable specimens of mendicant humanity; for the halt, the maimed, and the blind were obliged to depend largely on the generosity of the passer-by, there being but few institutions to harbour them. The houses were high, so that little sunlight ever penetrated to the street below, which was ill-kept and dirty. Down the centre ran a gutter, which served to carry off the rain that poured in

THE "COUR DU DRAGON."

FACING PAGE 141.

torrents from the mouths of the gargoyles and roofs, on to the heads of the unfortunate passers-by. In any weather, the pedestrian, solicitous for his coat and beaver, would protect them under the ample shade of a large umbrella; for the housewives considered the street as public property, and, without word or warning, would open hastily a window in some high house front, and dash the contents of a greasy saucepan, or soapy bucket, down on the heads of those luckless enough to be passing.

It was only under Charles V., in 1370, that the streets were paved at all. Before that, man and beast floundered their way through the muddy alleys that, with the least shower, became a bog. The first public conveyances date from 1645. The idea was due to Pascal, but it was only as late as 1828 that a regular service was organised. The streets of Paris were lighted, for the first time, during the reign of Louis XIV. Even then, those who would venture abroad after nightfall must be armed and accompanied by a lantern bearer, for in every corner lurked thieves, cut-throats, and bandits, whom the insufficient police were quite unable to keep in check.

Of these old streets, some few remaining, here and there, about the city, give us an idea of its aspect, before broad thoroughfares had opened up access in every direction. Then rich and poor dwelt side by side, the hovel threw its stunted shadow on the carved gateway of its neighbour, the palace, while the lofty spires of the churches rose through the confusion of clustering roofs that humbly nestled beneath their spiritual protection. The silver tongued bells rang out not only the call to prayers and the hours of the day, but also sounded the alarm, and gave the time to rise, and that at which all honest men must be a-bed. Guilds gathered in the same quarters, and have left their trace in the names of many streets, from which the last member of the fraternity has long emigrated, although, in the old Cour du Dragon, we find still congregated the small ironmongers who have made it their stamping ground for over a hundred years.

Of all the curious names of streets, as well as of all the obsolete cries of Paris that made the town so picturesque, there is no space here to speak, nor is there place to illustrate the quaintness of the signboards so rapidly disappearing.

It seems odd enough that in so cosmopolitan a city as Paris a Ghetto should still exist. But those who thread the heart of the Marais will find, in the Rue des Rosiers, types of the Hebrew race, that would tempt the brush of a Rembrandt or Teniers. It does not need the Hebraic sign, painted upon every house front, to tell us we are amongst the children of Abraham. Sitting in the shadowy recesses of their little booths and shops, are fat old women, whose pale, pasty faces look out from the frame of false fronts of coarse, black hair, dear to the aged daughters of Zion. The wares offered for sale are of the poorest; unsavoury meat and vegetables, or cheap household and toilet articles are all the unpalatable little counters hold. But such a bargaining is going on as might satisfy the soul of even a Turkish merchant. Evidently, with a Jewish dealer, it is not the article he sells that has its price, but rather the customer he would sell it to. Bearded patriarchs and thick-lipped juveniles guard the sordid wares suspiciously. Every other door is the haunt of the hook-nosed old clothes broker, whose piercing voice pleads lamentably with the passer-by to buy or sell. Here come and go Jews of every nationality—Jews German, Jews Russian, Jews Portuguese, and Jews Polish. Every imaginable variation of the same unmistakable type has flocked, as though by instinct, to this poor quarter of Paris. On a battered second story front, one sees Passover Bread advertised for sale. Indeed, the greasy rabbis one meets at every turn look orthodox enough, and there is precious little leaven of any kind in the heavy atmosphere of the Rue des Rosiers and its inhabitants.

Perhaps one of the great charms of Paris is that each quarter of the city is characteristic and different from its neighbour. Not one of the thoroughfares of the town is a more unique and

THE RUE DES PATRIARCHES.

complete world within itself than the Rue Mouffetard, once called Rue St. Marcel, that has existed since the Middle Ages. Here, on a Sunday morning, will be heard such a chattering and crying that it seems as though, in lieu of housewives, a hundred thousand parrots have met to do their marketing. The narrow passage is crowded from end to end with eager shoppers. Pavements, sidewalks, doorways are packed so tightly that it is with difficulty one pushes a way through the baskets loaded with provisions that each purchaser carries on her arm, and that give one many a sharp knock, as the surging crowd of humanity separates, only to close again into a compact mass. Hoarse-voiced hawkers scream the prices of their wares exposed to view, busy wives drive thrifty bargains, neighbours gossip and laugh, and everyone seems to say what they have to say at the top of their voices, while with their high-peaked alpaca caps drawn over their roaming eyes, the young Apache dandies of the "Fortifs" or the Buttes Chaumont, stroll negligently through the throngs, a flower or a cigarette stuck carelessly in a corner of their lips, their hair carefully combed forward over the temple in a studied curl, and a bright tie lightening the sombreness of a suit of shabby velveteen. As they pass through the crowds many an admiring glance follows these heroes of the Police Gazette. The Rue Mouffetard is one of the favourite haunts of the 20th century "Chevaliers d'Industrie." Many a dire plot has been hatched behind the zinc counters of these low-roofed, tiny cafés. Many schemes of vengeance or gnawing jealousy have found their final expression in a death stab from one of the cruel, curved knives we see protruding from the red worsted belts of the gentlemen of leisure, who are playing a game of dominoes around a table in the little bar. They play silently, swiftly, with few words. Now and then comes a rapid gesture, and we feel, as we look at them, that here is a world upon whose mysterious threshold we are but peeping intruders. We will never be able to comprehend a psychology so different from our own. For these people have their rigorous code of

THE RUE MOUFFETARD.

FACING PAGE 144

honour, their own laws, etiquette, boundaries, and limitations, all as sharply drawn and as tacitly accepted as our own, and all so diametrically opposed to the laws recognised by organised Society, that it is indeed a world of different mentality. That there can be good here, as well as evil, we do not doubt; one sees its possibilities written on many of the careworn faces. For what human crowd is not full of elements of nobility? But, in this overworked, swarming street, where life is a struggle and a perpetual wrangle, the majority of the tired eyes we meet are very hard. And the heteroclitic denizens of the Rue Mouffetard are comprised but of two classes of society—the hunted and the hunters.

Of the scholastic Paris of the Middle Ages, there are, unfortunately, but few traces left. One of the last remaining centres of the life of the universities is being rapidly destroyed in the clearing away of that nest of tortuous streets which surround the Church of St. Severin. Progress has long halted, uncertain where to begin its work, in this corner of antique houses pressed, one against another, like teeth in an overcrowded jaw. Unfortunately during these last few years, municipal reforms have been rife, and these isolated survivors of the past are fast giving place to the large avenues and colourless symmetry of the present. In olden days all this quarter of St. Severin was a popular one for the clerks of Parliament, the students of the various universities, and the learned doctors of the Sorbonne near by. At No. 3, Rue St. Severin, was a house dedicated to "Le Dieu d'Amour"; at No. 2 lived, in the XVIIth century, Fromageau, the confessor of those condemned to death. And near by, No. 20, "La Maison du Paon Blanc" was one of those Rôtisseries of which Paris possessed many until a few years ago, and of which Monsieur Anatole France has given us so delightful a picture in his "Rôtisserie de la Reine Pédauque." When the needy students of the University passed before the open door, from which a succulent odour of roasting chickens would greet their hungry nostrils, they might feast their eyes,

at least, upon the spectacle of dozens of golden capons steaming on the turning spits before a roaring fire. The poor scholar, whose cheek was as flat as his gusset, would stop, longingly munching his dry crust, within view of the tempting display. It was at this very Carrefour de Saint Severin that Seigni Joan, Rabelais tells us, rendered a judgment worthy of the wisdom of Solomon, against a "Rôtisseur," who had the pretension to claim payment from a poor devil, who had been lingering near the tempting entry, from which the fumes of hot fowl came pouring forth. Seigni Joan ordered the student to drop a coin on the pavement and pocket it afterwards; he then declared that the Rôtisseur's claims were settled, for the ring of a coin was certainly just payment for the fumes of a roast.

Founded during the Mérovingian period, under the patronage of St. Severin the Solitary, a contemporary of Childebert I., the Church of St. Severin was knocked down during the Norman invasions, and re-constructed from its ruins in 1050. The parish of St. Severin being in the quarter of the University, its ministers enjoyed the title of "Archiprêtre" and precedence over their fellows. The most ancient part of the present edifice is the wall which gives upon the Rue des Prêtres. The church was greatly added to during the 15th century. Under St. Severin still exist the charnel chambers of the ancient cemetery. Here, in 1587, Catherine de Lorraine, sister to "le Balafré," had several devotional paintings exhibited, representing, says l'Estoile, "the strange inhumanities exercised by the Queen of England against Catholics, all of which was done to excite the people to war against the Huguenots." The access to the charnel chambers was by a little passage which still exists between the numbers 10 and 12, Rue de la Parcheminerie. On the doorway was inscribed:

"Passant, penses-tu passer par ce passage
Où, pensant, j'ai passé?
Si tu n'y penses pas, passant, tu n'es pas sage,
Car, en n'y pensant pas, tu te verras passé."

CHURCH OF ST. SEVERIN.

FACING PAGE 146.

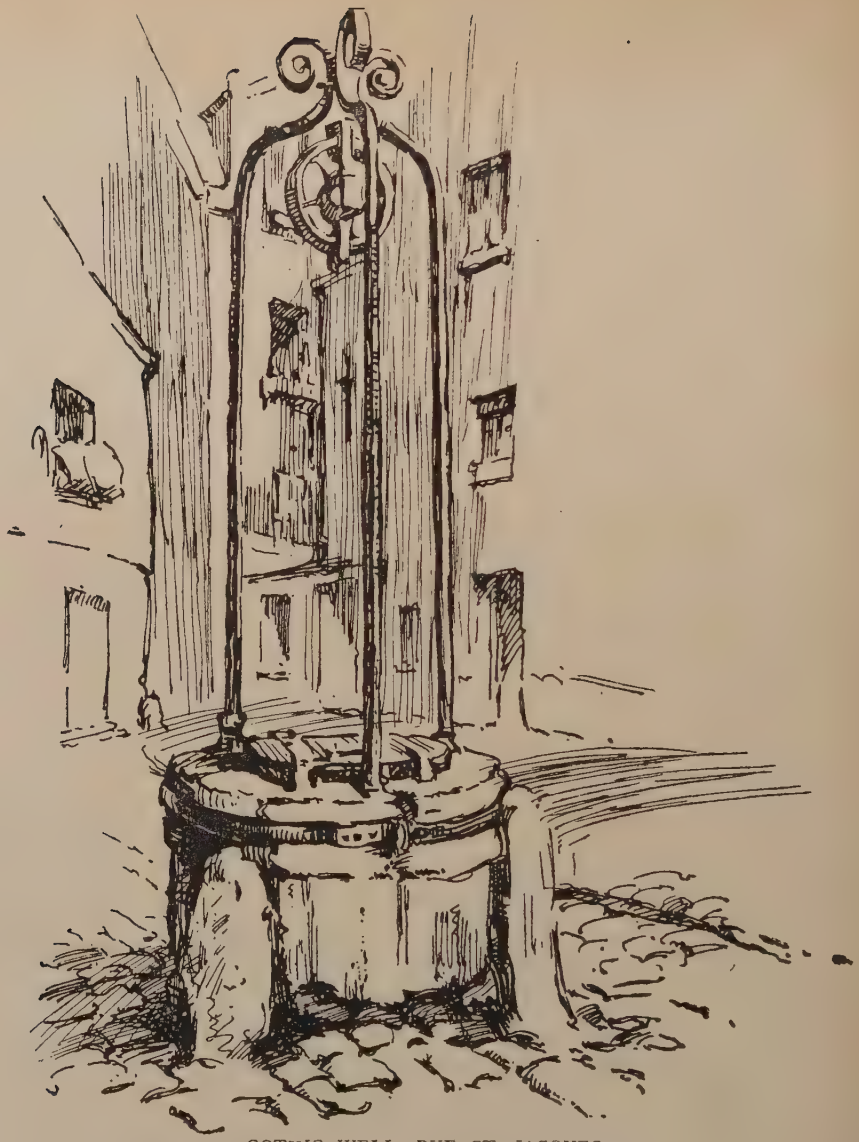
Near this lugubrious inscription, a clerk lived in long bygone years, and, opposite to him, lodged his sweetheart. She was so well guarded that her lover could never meet her. So, one day, the legend tells us, as he was lamenting his ill-luck, Satan, who was passing at the time, heard him, and offered his services to help the gallant out of his dilemma. Leaning with his back against the wall of St. Severin, his Satanic Majesty lifted his tail against the opposite house, so that the amorous clerk might walk upon it to his ladylove's window. But, alack! when daylight bid the Romeo to be gone, the Devil's extemporised bridge appeared less solid than by the rays of moonlight. The clerk, trembling, made the sign of the cross, as he ventured on to the treacherous tight-rope, and immediately, at the holy gesture, Satan took flight, and down crashed the poor clerk on the hard pavement below, where there was an end to his adventures, for he was picked up in so sad a plight that even his lady recoiled from him in horror. And the legend adds that, when the fair one consoled herself with other admirers, she bade them arrive at her window by a surer road than the Devil's tail. Since when the French have called a mistake "un pas de clerc."

That immense highway of the scholastic Catholicism of bygone ages, the Rue St. Jacques, is still, in all its entity, filled with memories of the past. At 254, the ancient company of "Les Frères Hospitalies de Saint Jacques" built the seminary of their military order, at the end of the 14th century. No. 284, now occupied by a smithy, was the entrance of the convent of the Carmelite sisters, on the model of the order of Santa Theresa. Its French branch was founded by the Duchesse de Longueville, in 1602. On the 21st of April, 1674, Louise de la Vallière, then but thirty years of age, quitted the pomps and vanities of Court life, and entered this convent door, which she was never to repass again. The Carmelite rules were no more indulgent towards the great King's mistress, than to the humblest penitent of the Order. The sisters were all treated alike: four

CARMELITE CONVENT, RUE ST. JACQUES.

bare walls, a wooden bed, shaped like a coffin, in which the nuns slept, covered by one coarse, serge sheet. A chair, a wooden spoon, an earthenware bowl, a crucifix were all that their cells contained. Their fare consisted of vegetables, rye bread, and milk. They had to rise at five, and could not retire before eleven. The long day was spent in prayer and penitence. On the 30th of June that followed her entry to the Carmelites, the Duchesse de la Vallière donned the dress of her Order, with its rough, cord sandals and coarse cloth habit. Before a year passed, the postulant was received. Bossuet himself pronounced the oration, before an audience which comprised the greatest personages of the realm. At the moment when the audience was left palpitating with emotion beneath the eloquent exhortations of the great orator, and as the peal of the organ filled the air, the Mother Superior advanced, and, taking the penitent by the hand, led her to a little space arranged to represent a grave. There, as she prostrated herself upon the ground, a black pall was thrown upon her. The Duchesse de la Vallière was dead to the world! For thirty-seven years Sister Louise de la Miséricorde lived immured within the walls of the convent of the Rue St. Jacques. At last, upon a fair summer day of that month of June, in which Louise de la Vallière had first made her appearance at the Court of Fontainebleau, she passed peacefully away, happy to be called from a life whose youth was torn by passion and unhappiness, and whose maturity had been but a long penitence and abnegation.

At No. 29, the Schola Cantorum occupies the ancient monastery of the English Benedictines, where, in 1701, the body of the Pretender, James the Second of England, was deposited. But the whole of this Rue St. Jacques is so full of memories that to recall them would fill a volume. Yet we would tarry an instant before the old house that bears the number of 218, for on this spot the charming "Romaunt of the Rose" was written. To think that these stones have echoed to the footsteps of



GOTHIC WELL, RUE ST. JACQUES.

Villon, Rabelais, and Jean de Meung surely hallows them, and makes the venerable old street sacred to all who love the mellow past and its traditions.

OLD SIGN. RUE GEOFFROY ST. HILAIRE.

THE HILL OF MONTMARTRE, FROM THE RIVER.

CHAPTER X

MONTMARTRE AND ITS WINDMILLS

There are few travellers or tourists to Paris who have not visited Montmartre. Its very name is synonymous of all that is most "up-to-date" in the modern life of the capital. The life of "La Butte," as its frequenters call the hill of Montmartre, is a thing apart, unique and intensely representative of the movement of art, wit, and joviality, that makes Paris such an attractive playground for the civilised world, on pleasure bent. Yet the past of Montmartre was as typical and picturesque as its present—nay, infinitely more so. The little cabarets, where foreigners crowd to see the dancers of the quarter, or hear the lank-haired poets recite their own impromptu verses, are but the continuation of a long hierarchy of establishments of very much the same order. The "apaches" of to-day are the descendants of the bandits of a few centuries ago. And Montmartre has been the haunt of Bohemians of all kinds and classes, ever since that ancestral Prince of "Rapins," François Villon, wrote of it in the 15th century as "Ung lieu moult ancien."

When Paris called itself Lutece, and when Cæsar's legions drank unfiltered the crystal waters of the river Seine, the eminence, which overlooked the Roman City, was chosen as a suitable site for a Temple to be dedicated to Mars. It was on the hill named in his honour, Le Mont-Martis, that the Romans

LE MOULIN DE LA GALETTE.

FACING PAGE 153.

accordingly came to worship the God of War who had led them to the pleasant land of Gaul and crowned their arms with victory. "The country of the Gauls is peculiarly favoured," wrote Cæsar, "and its inhabitants could have become masters of the world, were not each man for himself and everyone against his neighbour." The trait that Cæsar's keen eye noticed two thousand years ago has remained unchanged. But if it has made a divided and restless people, it has also been an important factor in developing the individuality and activity that makes the French race and its history so interesting to the observer.

The vines, imported by the Romans 150 years before Christ, prospered so exceedingly in Gaul that its fair plains and hills soon became covered with the graceful growth, and the hill of Montmartre especially was one of the first to be planted and given over to the culture of the grape. As Rome gave place again to the re-conquering Gaul, the Temple of Mars fell into disuse and a temple dedicated to Bacchus replaced it. The jolly god was always a popular one on French soil. As late as the 12th century there were altars in Paris at which he was adored, and he ceased to be worshipped only when the Catholic clergy received him into the Church calendar as Saint Bacchus. But more than the products of its vines, the lime kilns of Montmartre brought renown to the hill. They were worked at a very early date, and most of Paris has been built with the plaster extricated from these quarries. It was in a deserted quarry that Saint Denis, the patron of Paris, and his companions in persecution, found refuge. On the site of the martyr's resting-place, a chapel was erected in 1304. Later, in 1373, an abbey was built on the holy ground by the noble lady Abbess, Isabelle de Rieux, and it was she who owned the quarries and conceded to contractors the right of working them. This lime of Montmartre was of a rare quality, and made excellent plaster and pottery. Bernard de Palissy recommended it as superior to any other. When the Italian architects and

sculptors arrived in France, in the 16th century, bringing with them the Renaissance style of architecture, they found the friable stone well adapted to the carvings and ornamentation of the churches and palaces, which the Italian Queens, Catherine and Marie de Medicis, ordered to be constructed in imitation of those of Italy. It was these Italian workmen who first made the plaster statuettes that one so often sees being sold along the parapets of the bridges. Nothing is new, and the little copies of the Venus de Milo, or the Diana, or the Victory, are the direct descendants of an art that came from Greece to Italy and was introduced to France by the Italians. Maître Raoul Bouteraïs, a Counsellor of the Palace of Justice in the 16th century, sang in a poem of many cantos the praise of this wonderful plaster from the quarries of Montmartre. It not only served to decorate Paris, but was imported across the Channel to England, and most of the original Adams' mouldings are made of the good, old plaster extricated from the hill of Montmartre.

It was on the 15th of August, 1534, beside the Fountain of St. Denis, that Ignace de Loyola, then 33 years of age, and his companions, came to partake of a frugal, symbolic repast, and pronounce the solemn vows of renunciation from the world, and absolute devotion and obedience to their order, which were to be the rules of the new Society of Jesus, founded on that day and approved by the Pope Paul III. under the title of "Clercs de la Compagnie de Jesus." Exactly one hundred years after the corner stone of the mighty Society of the Jesuits was laid, a new sect gathered on Montmartre, to found, in their turn, another society that was to rival, in absolutism and secrecy, that of the Jesuits. It was the Order of Freemasons. It is a strange coincidence that the two most autocratic organisations in the world—organisations destined to combat each other through centuries—should have sprung into being on the same soil.

Where the "Good Vincent de Paul" had come to exhort the labourers in the quarry by his words and example, the sorcerers of the 18th century established their profane temples. In January, 1752, a certain Delafosse was convicted of practising magic and holding black masses in an abandoned quarry, arranged as a mock chapel. Here, to consult him, ladies of the Court, masked to avoid recognition, would flock at nightfall. One of them, Madame de Montboissier, was exiled to a convent for life, as a punishment for having frequented and encouraged Delafosse.

The Revolution, that respected nothing, turned into lime ovens the chapel where the bones of St. Denis and Ignace de Loyola reposed. The quarries then served as a refuge, not for martyrs, but for all the cut-throats and thieves of the capital. Marat came to hide there during one of the periods when his violence had gained him the disfavour of the population of Paris.

What is now the Bois de Boulogne was known, in olden times, as the Forest of Rouvray. It extended as far as Montmartre, then a Royal preserve, where the stags were sometimes attacked, or run to death, on the border of the forest, at the foot of the Butte. Henri IV., who was a mighty hunter, and loved the Royal sport of chasing the stag, had a hunting lodge on the hill. It has disappeared long since, though at least a dozen shambling old ruins are reputed to be the rendezvous of the King and his mistress, Gabrielle d'Estrées.

In ancient days, Montmartre was supposed to be haunted by genii and fairies who lived in its grottos and springs and exercised charms upon the inhabitants. Of the many limpid sources and fountains once springing up from the rocky soil, few remain. Of them all, the most celebrated was the fountain of St. Denis, but there were also "La Fontaine du Buc," "La Fontaine de la Bonne," and La Fontenelle, around which the housewives of the Butte would gather to wash their linen, singing those old-fashioned roundelays and ballads, more humorous than delicate, so dear to the hearts of the people of

the Middle Ages. According to local belief, the Fountain of St. Denis was possessed of wonderful healing properties. It was situated on the west slope of the hill, and tradition averred that it was here that Saint Denis, after being decapitated, stopped to wash his severed head, which he had carried in his hand from the place of his execution. The peasants, who lived in the vicinity of the fountain, reported that, after night had fallen, choruses of angels' voices would often be heard singing around the holy spring. Loyola and his comrades had pledged each other in a loving cup of the holy water, passed from hand to hand on the day they pronounced their vows. The Virgins who drank at the Martyr's well remained faithful wives, and its virtues were celebrated by troubadours, and reverenced by the population.

If we cast our eyes over an old plan of Paris, dating from the 17th or 18th century, we are astonished at the quantity of windmills, to be seen marked in every direction. We can imagine the aspect of the city, with its numberless churches and convents, its fortresses, its narrow winding streets, lined by high-gabled houses; while, on every little eminence, stood the busy windmills, their thousand arms stretched in pursuit of the silvery clouds that sweep across the changing sky.

Paris was, indeed, a very city of mills; there were more than two hundred within sight. On the vine-clad hill of Montmartre alone, there were over thirty great and small pairs of brown wings whirring in the breeze. No lesser personage than the poet Tasso was struck by their beauty, and the charm they lent the landscape. The poet visited Paris in 1570, in the suite of the Cardinal Louis d'Este, who came as Italian Ambassador to the Court of Charles IX. Tasso wrote to his friends in Ferrare, complaining of the uncertain and capricious climate of Paris, in harmony with the changing humours of its population. Neither the one, nor the other, pleased the Italian, and he lamented over the monotony of the misty landscapes, so dull and colourless to one accustomed to the revel of hues and

radiance of light of the sun-kissed land of Italy. Even the marvellous Gothic cathedrals seemed but massive and severe to Tasso, though he acknowledged some admiration of their wonderful stained glass windows. But his enthusiasm was awakened by the windmills of Montmartre turning and twisting on their pivots. Here, at last, was a spectacle of ever-varying beauty, and he is loud in his praises of their quaintness, charm, and poetry. These same debonair windmills of Montmartre have acted their noble part in the historic pageant of the nation. In time of war their towers served as posts of observation. The old "Moulin de la Galette," that dominates Paris in this year of 1910, was built in 1295, and from its high galleries Etienne Marcel, in the year 1358, watched with anxious eyes the bands of foreign mercenaries who were devastating the faubourgs of the city. The windmills lost some of their popularity under Louis XVI., when a desperate famine threatened the population. Flour was known to be hidden somewhere within the city walls, and the people clamoured for bread. The Government had all the grain contained in the mills of Montmartre transported secretly and at night to Havre. From there it was brought back to Paris by boat, and reported as having freshly arrived from America. It was sold for literally its weight in gold. When it transpired that the bread for which the poor were paying so dear, was made from the grain stored at Montmartre, the populace grew furious, and would certainly have burnt the mills, had they been more accessible. But luckily they were perched on the steep hill, up which only a footpath led, and the Parisians contented themselves with looking up and cursing them from a distance.

The mills of Montmartre, and particularly the "Moulin de la Galette," were the scene of a courageous defence, at the time when the allied armies entered Paris, in 1814. Notwithstanding the strategical advantages of its elevated position, the Butte had been but poorly prepared for its defence, and possessed only nine pieces of ordnance. On the morning of the 30th of

March, Napoleon's brother, King Joseph, established his headquarters at "Le Château Rouge," an ancient royal hunting box, in the Rue Clignancourt. There he passed in review his troops, composed of several companies of National Guards, reinforced by volunteers, who were to man the batteries on the Butte. The hill was a key to Paris; and its retention was most important. "Hold your ground, gentlemen," cried Joseph, addressing his little army, "The Emperor is at the gates of Paris and in possession of La Villette." Unfortunately, Joseph was mistaken; it was not Napoleon, but the allies who even at that very moment were advancing to the attack.

The fighting soon began! On the heights of Montmartre, it was fast and furious, and the artillerymen, overpowered by numbers, notwithstanding a heroic resistance, were hacked to pieces beside their cannons which they would not abandon, although the odds against them were fearful. Amongst the bravest of the defenders were the four brothers Debray, sons of the proprietor of the mills, which were the principal point of attack. Riddled with bullets, the three younger brothers fell while defending their position. The eldest Debray still remained unharmed, and, with the help of a young son and a few followers, served with fatal effect the piece of ordnance planted on the terrace of his mill. He had watched his brothers fall, and vowed he would avenge them. The order to cease firing was given in the allied ranks. The news of the capitulation of Paris had reached them. Debray, undaunted, remained quietly beside his cannon, as the order to advance upon the mill was given. A column of Russian infantry began to climb the steep ascent. Debray waited until it was within easy range, then taking a cool and steady aim, he poured two full charges of shot into the ranks of his enemies. Their loss was fearful! For a while they staggered and retreated, but their officers rallied them, and, leaping over the bodies of their comrades, they rushed with a yell of rage upon the heroic miller and his little band. Debray advanced from his companions, and

as the Russian officer was about to lay his hand upon him, he raised his pistol and shot him dead. There was a savage howl from the enemy, and, in a moment, the devoted defender of the mill was torn to pieces. His body was taken, cut in four, and each limb bound on a wing of his windmill. The sunset went down on the great brown arms, whirling round with their ghastly burden, as though they were taking the master, who had so often set them in motion, on a long, mysterious journey into the wild country of the winds. The following night, Debray's widow came to detach the mutilated remains from their strange, uneasy vigil. They were carried in an empty flour sack to the little cemetery of St. Pierre, where they were buried. The lad, who had served with his father in the defence of the post, was found, by the Russians, hiding inside the mill. They dragged him out, and nailed him with a lance to the pivot on which the wheel turned. The next day he managed to escape, living, from his horrible crucifixion. He recovered, and only died thirty years afterwards, although from that day he was never able to take any nourishment more solid than milk.

It is the great-grandson of the hero of the defence, Monsieur Auguste Debray, who is the actual proprietor of the old mill which still bears, in its time-blackened timbers, the bullets of the Russian infantry who stormed it in 1814.

This last surviving relic of the windmills of Montmartre was known by the name of "But-a-fin," until its proprietors rechristened it "Moulin de la Galette." It has been in the hands of the Debrays, from father to son, for centuries; for their names figure in the leases of the "Dames Benedictines de Montmartre," as farmer millers, since the 14th century. The mill came into their actual possession in 1640. The "Moulin de la Galette" has evoked the admiration of such painters as Charles Jacque and Corot, and has been sung by a hundred poets, amongst whom, perhaps, the most enthusiastic was Gerard de Nerval. a devoted frequenter of Montmartre.

The charming situations of the windmills made them an easy point of access to the excursion-loving Parisians, and there were no lack of mills to choose from, the "Moulin de la Route," "Moulin du Paradis," "Moulin de la Lancette," and "Moulin des Brouillards" (I like the latter name, it suggests the huge arms feeling through the fog to catch the first breath of wind abroad). Gradually most of the mills fell into disuse and decay, or were absorbed by the growing city. During the last centuries, on sunny holiday afternoons, the people of the faubourgs would wend their way afoot up the steep path of the vine-clad hill of Montmartre, to enjoy, as only a Parisian public can enjoy, the simple pleasures of a rural site, a glass of wine, and a slice of the homely, grey bread served by the miller's wife, on the terrace overlooking the shining valley of the Seine, and the distant roofs of the city spread far below.

It is thanks to the Debray family that Montmartre still possesses a survivor or two of these rare old sentinels of its primitive past. In 1833, one of the descendants of the bold miller decided to open a rustic dancing place, and the historic windmill was dedicated to Terpsichore. The Debray of that time was an ardent lover of the dance. He passed for the lightest and most agile foot of the quarter; indeed, there was not his equal to be found in Paris for cutting a pigeon wing. Nothing amused him more, after his day's work was finished, than to gather together a band of jolly young people, who made the venerable mill tremble to the movement of their lancers and polkas. Debray was the presiding genius of the festivity, correcting this one, exhorting another, and setting the example to all. So the whole Butte of Montmartre became dancing mad, and the "Moulin de la Galette" a veritable temple of the Goddess of Movement.

One day it occurred to Debray that what he did for his amusement, he might as well do for his profit; and so the public ball of the "Moulin de la Galette" was founded. Its success surpassed all expectations, and a large hall had to be built to

hold the crowds that thronged to "foot it on the light fantastic toe." So the great, restless wings at last folded themselves into a final and immovable repose, and their perpetual motion passed into the eager young feet that came to dance away a happy hour under the benediction of the ancient arms. Such is the story of But-a-fin, who has stood on the top of the Butte, perched precariously on one leg, during six hundred and fourteen seasons of successive storm and sunshine. The aged, black rafters look indulgently down on the passing generations of pleasure seekers or lovers. Yet, as it looms against a lurid winter sky, high above its sordid and mundane surroundings, the rude windmill of the past hardly seems part of to-day. When the winds of March tear through the nakedness of its skeleton arms, old But-a-fin will moan and tremble in all its venerable frame. Perhaps, it is then that it remembers! remembers the sombre evening, a hundred years ago, when, all through the wild March night, it carried to his eternal resting place the valiant miller, who had defended its rights so desperately against the invader's foot.

But, alas! from the antiquaries' point of view, the golden days of Montmartre are a thing of the past. Its picturesque mills, its primitive little cabarets and vine-clad heights have disappeared, to give place to pretentious, modern music halls, or high apartment houses. Busy streets are opened on the site of the lime quarries, where Loyola sought retirement from the world, or where the masked Court ladies came to consult the mysterious sorcerer Delafosse. There are few points which would now tempt the brush of a Corot or a Jacque, or evoke the enthusiasm of Tasso. Yet, such as it is, Montmartre is not wanting in a certain sordid quaintness. It is a world and population apart, that has an atmosphere of its own. The great Cathedral, raised by the subscriptions of the people, crowns the heights where once the music of the whirring windmills filled the air. Lit by the splendour of the setting sun, it seems, as we look at it from afar, a very Walhalla, or fairy palace of the gods, built to be

occupied by the vanished genii and nymphs who once inhabited the grottos, caverns, and the fountains of the ancient Mont-Martis.

AN OLD STREET CORNER.

OLD FOUNTAIN-HEAD IN THE MARAIS.

CHAPTER XI

NINON DE LENCLOS

Surely beauty, which is, perhaps, of all perishable things the most fragile, is yet the one gift of the gods on which the memory lingers tenaciously. Helen of Troy will be spoken of when Ajax and Achilles' exploits, or old Priam's wisdom, lie long forgotten. Though the flower of human loveliness fade from the earth, it leaves its perfume in the air.

The fair woman, whose image we would evoke, was one of the world's greatest sirens. For more than the three score years allotted to man, she wielded the sceptre of an unchallenged supremacy. She was the lustre and love light of her time, and her marvellous seduction held captive the generations of that century of pleasure in which she lived and moved.

Anne de Lenclos was born in Paris, in 1620. She was the only daughter of a gentleman of Touraine, who served in the suite of the Duc d'Elbeuf. Monsieur de Lenclos was obliged to leave France, shortly after Ninon's birth, having killed the Baron de Chabans in a duel, which savoured somewhat of an assassination, for Chabans had not put up his guard before Lenclos ran him through the body. Henri de Lenclos was a jolly gentleman, with not too much morality, nor too many

scruples, whose chief aim in life was pleasure. Madame de Lenclos, on the contrary, was a woman of great piety. She educated the young daughter left under her sole care and direction, according to the custom of that day, which consisted in giving her a complete knowledge of the Prayer Book, the Lives of the Martyrs, and a deportment suitable to her rank as a gentlewoman. Mademoiselle de Lenclos was most accomplished in the intricate measures of the formal dances then in vogue. She sang and played the lute, wrote more or less correctly (a person of quality was not required to spell) and possessed, above all, to crown her accomplishments, a beautiful face and figure, and a particular grace of manner.

The quarter of the town which Madame de Lenclos inhabited was one of the most fashionable, as it was also one of the most "gallant" in Paris. Ninon lived surrounded by examples that hardly tended to cultivate austerity. Such a charmer was bound not to pass long unnoticed, and, at the age of fifteen, Mademoiselle de Lenclos had already a host of admirers. Her choice lighted on Charles de Beaumont, Sieur de St. Etienne. Madame de Lenclos, thinking the gallant was a possible husband, encouraged his visits and assiduities. But Ninon was as little inclined for matrimony as St. Etienne himself. After a brief idyl, each went their way. Ninon's was to the arms of the Chevalier de Raray. One day, when, during the absence of her mother, she was talking to her lover before the door, a beggar, whining for alms, planted himself near the couple. Nothing would induce him to leave the young people alone, though they had not a penny in their pockets. "Here," cried Ninon, throwing him her lace pocket handkerchief, "take this and sell it, but, at least, leave us in peace!" Mademoiselle de Lenclos had begun her career!

It was hardly possible to remain longer under Madame de Lenclos' pious roof, notwithstanding the toleration of the customs of that time. Ninon moved to a house of her own, Rue des Trois Pavillons (now Rue Elzevir). To those who did not please

HOUSE OF NINON DE LENCLOS, IN THE RUE DES TOURNELLES.

her, she was inexorable, whatever the advantages they offered; to those who half pleased her, she would say, "I can promise you nothing. Await my caprice, if you choose." With those who pleased her wholly, she herself took the initiative.

Mademoiselle de Lenclos was not venal, and she had the rare quality of sincerity. Her admirers were divided into two categories, known as the "favourites" and the "martyrs." Her rule in life, if she acknowledged any rule, was never to give the slightest favour to those who left her heart untouched—true, that Ninon's heart was easily won, and she counted her adorers by the dozen. When she tired, she would tell her admirers that as she had had enough of them, they must seek good fortune elsewhere. Yet, in ceasing to be a mistress, she remained a loyal and devoted friend. "I think I shall love you for three months," she said to Rambouillet, and, when he chid her for fixing so short a limit, "My dear," she answered, "for me it is an eternity." All the town crowded to Mademoiselle de Lenclos' house. During Lent she held open table, and, contrary to the custom in all classes, meat was served daily to her guests. One of them got his hostess into disgrace by throwing a bone out of the window, which unluckily fell on the head of the priest of Saint-Sulpice, who was passing. Ninon received a visit from the authorities, and it required all the influence of her friends to protect her from the ire of the Church and the punishment of the Law.

Mademoiselle de Lenclos' lovers were amongst the highest in the kingdom; her love affairs, her witticisms, her beauty, were the topic of Court and town. In the young Duc d'Enghien, she perhaps recognised the future conqueror, Le Grand Condé, though she said that "it required a hundred times more wit to make love than to lead an army." Richelieu did not please her, and she would have none of him. He never forgave her.

She considered that he who would love must be rather the master than the slave of passion, and she invariably left her

lovers before they had time to tire, or even to grow accustomed. Ninon regarded love as the first of all arts, and certainly, in her profession, she was a great artist. She was the cause of more than one fatal duel; but she did not reproach herself, having always told her lovers that she would be faithful only while her fancy lasted, which was never long. Ninon's motto was, "Be *inconstant* as long as you can, for the times comes when you can no longer be so." Some of La Rochefoucauld's maxims on love were, perhaps, inspired by Ninon, for he was one of her assiduous frequenters.

Mademoiselle de Lenclos, though already about forty years old, was as yet untouched by the hand of time, when she had the good, or rather ill-fortune, to meet Villarceaux. He was to give her heart the only lesson in fidelity that it ever acknowledged. He united physical advantages with a lively intelligence; his jealous disposition was a perpetual burning of incense on the altar of love. He was the sincerest passion of Ninon's life. She left the adulation of a whole population to live with him in the seclusion of the country, where for three years she exiled herself from friends, admirers, and pleasures. He was a jealous lover, and, to appease him one day, when he was ill, she cut off her magnificent hair and sent it to him as an offering.

It was the one occasion in her career in which she was wanting in science; she revealed the secret, that a woman should always keep from the man she loves—that he was indispensable to her. Villarceaux was the first to tire. After such a long period of fidelity, Ninon threw herself into a vortex of folly, which ended by exciting the ire of the Queen Mother, although Anne of Austria, more than any other, should have forgiven those who listened rather to the promptings of their hearts than of their heads. Perhaps Madame de Villarceaux had influenced the Queen; she was desperately in love with her husband, and jealous of Ninon.

It was with small enthusiasm that Mademoiselle de Lenclos received the Queen's order to retire to a convent. The person,

who bore the letter, suggested that she should choose the "Repentant Sisters," as the Queen had left her free to go where she liked. "I am neither a sister, nor repentant," she answered when she was sent to "les Madelonnettes." The authorities were obliged to have a guard to surround the convent, as the army of Ninon's admirers swore they would destroy it to liberate her; she was therefore moved to Lagny. On her visit to France, Queen Christina of Sweden expressed a desire to see the celebrated beauty. They had an admirer in common, the Maréchal d'Albret, who had sung Ninon's praises, and it was he who arranged the interview which lasted for some hours.

In the bibliothéque de l'Institut, there is a memorial of the entry of the Swedish Queen into the City of Paris, and of her sojourn there. The author informs us "that Christina separated from Mademoiselle de Lenclos with such admiration and esteem for the fine quality of her intelligence, that she immediately wrote to the King, Louis XIV., requesting him to liberate her and recommending his Majesty to send for Ninon, as he would certainly find great diversion and profit in her society." The request was acceded to, and, although she was not called to Court, Ninon was allowed to return to her house, in the Rue des Tournelles, where she received her numerous visitors in the famous yellow room, from which she wrote, one day, to St. Evremond that "she thanked God every night for her wit, and prayed to Him every morning to preserve her from the follies of her heart." Ninon's salon, if not one of the most prudish, was one of the most brilliant and exclusive of the town. The best tone prevailed, and the first statesmen, nobles, and poets gathered round the bewitching woman, who, if no longer in the spring of life, had retained all the fire of youth, and gained all the savour of maturity. Her charm was of that quality which, knowing no age, pervades, like a delicate perfume, the atmosphere around the woman who possesses it.

Amongst the most assiduous frequenters of Mlle. de Lenclos' salon was the poet Scarron. On Ninon's return from her

enforced seclusion, she found that Scarron had taken a fair young bride, Mlle. d'Aubigny. Scarron had said of his wife: "I will not ask her to commit follies, but I can teach them to her." Ninon also undertook the education of the future Madame de Maintenon, while Villarceaux, the charmer, laid siege to her heart. She did not remain insensible to his courtship; they met in the yellow room, which Ninon complacently placed at their disposal. But Mlle. de Lenclos found her pupil somewhat unsatisfactory. "In her youth," she says later, writing of the Marquise de Maintenon, "she was virtuous by weakness; I should have liked to cure her, but she was too God-fearing."

Meanwhile, Monsieur de Lenclos had returned to France after his long exile. He found his daughter at the climax of her career, nor was his pride in her diminished by the various incidents of her adventurous existence. But Henri de Lenclos was not troubled by unnecessary scruples. His chief aim in life had been enjoyment, and he appreciated the same taste in his daughter. When a sudden malady interrupted the current of his peaceful life, he felt that his end was approaching, and sent for Ninon. "My child," he called to her feebly, as she entered his room, "My child, the only regret I carry away with me is that of the enjoyment which I must leave behind. You, who remain, be rather scrupulous in the choice than the number of your pleasures," and, with these words on his lips, Ninon's father died.

Saint Evremond said of Ninon that, "Nature had wished to show that it is impossible to become old." One of her lovers, at this time, was the son of that Marquis de Sévigné, who had died in a duel, for her sake, twenty years before. Madame de Sévigné is hardly indulgent to Ninon in her correspondence, but she is forced to admit a wit that was undoubted, and she agrees as to the refinement and perfection of her manners. To frequent Mlle. de Lenclos was considered a liberal

education for the young men of the day. A course with her was the finishing touch in the forming of a courtier.

At sixty, she still inspired passions. Ninon had had a son by Monsieur de Gersay. The Chevalier de Villiers was ignorant of his origin, as he had been educated by his father. Like all young men of fashion, he was taken one day to be introduced to Mlle. de Lenclos, with the result that he fell in love with her. To cure his passion, Ninon revealed her identity, and the unhappy Chevalier killed himself. Perhaps such an adventure did much towards calming her coquetry. "Madame," the Regent's mother, writing about this time to the Duchess de Hanovre, says: "Since Mlle. de Lenclos has begun to grow old, she leads an absolutely irreproachable life. It seems that she says that she would never have reformed, if she had not found that, at her age, love becomes ridiculous. Her admirers were known as "les Oiseaux des Tournelles." At seventy-nine, she inspired her last passion in the breast of l'Abbé Gedoyn.

At eighty-five Ninon's friends found her failing. Her health was not what it had been; her dreams were haunted at nights by a little man in black, who had always fore-warned her of the momentous events of her life, and she attached great importance to his visits. If not religious, Ninon, like most of the women of her time, was superstitious; L'abbé Teste undertook her conversion. "He believes it will gain him great credit and an abbaye," she wrote, "but I am afraid, if he counts on my soul, he will die without honours." The Abbé gave up his hopes of gaining a proselyte in one who had put all the force of her mind and body, for three-quarters of a century, into the science of living joyously. "Mademoiselle," he cried in despair, "in waiting your conversion, at least offer a sacrifice of your incredulity to God."

It was in her house, in the Rue de Tournelles, that Mlle. de Lenclos passed her declining years. Here, one day, a lad of thirteen was brought by his godfather, M. Arouet, who was Ninon's notary. The young scholar pleased the great courtesan; she, who was no mean judge of men, divined the future Voltaire

in the shy schoolboy. On his side, Voltaire never forgot her. He had been told the legend of the celebrated beauty, and was surprised to find only a shrivelled old lady, who frightened him by her big eyes and her questions. In her will, Ninon left the young Voltaire a legacy with which to buy books.

The 15th of October, 1705, as Ninon slept, her sombre visitor reappeared three times, and pointed with a warning finger. She judged that his premonition was definitive, and sent for her friends. They called for the priest to come and administer the last sacraments, but when he arrived, it was too late! Ninon's rebellious heart had already fled to regions of perpetual youth.

Fifty years later, the Court ladies adopted the fashion of keeping a skull, with a lamp burning in it, in their oratories. The Queen Marie Leczinska had one decorated with ribbons, which she called "la belle mignonne." It was supposed to be the skull of Ninon de Lenclos. To such complexion had she come at last.

At the back of the Place des Vosges, once the centre and theatre of the life of the 17th century, runs the dingy Rue des Tournelles. In it stands the house where Ninon de Lenclos spent the long and brilliant years of her extraordinary career of pleasure. It was here also that she died.

One autumn day, a few years ago, curiosity led me to visit the place which holds so many memories of the beautiful courtesan. The Corinthian columns of the door stand back from the street in a mouldy courtyard, the entrance is dilapidated and the handsome balustrade of the stone stairway has been removed. The concierge gave me the key, hoping to find a tenant in a visitor who seemed so eager; I mounted the steps, and stood at the door before which so many hearts have beaten wildly. Here was the little ante-room, in which Dukes, Marquises, even Princes of the Church, anxiously awaited the caprice of the coquette, who, be she sixteen or sixty, could equally charm, captivate, and enchain.

And this was Ninon's salon! Ninon's room, with its once graceful garland of roses and cupids, rudely touched by the rough hand of time. And Ninon, where is she? Tell us, ancient mirror, silvery. transparently-green, like some mysterious lake upon which float fantastic flowers of shadowy mould. You, who have seen the great Mademoiselle de Lenclos in a hundred varying moods, what was she like? Did you ever murmur to her that truth which her lovers never realised; for to them she seemed endowed with eternal youth!

There is nothing in the palpable world more terrifying than the mirrors of the past! Silent witnesses, partakers even, of the lives which their immutable surfaces have once faithfully reflected, and which have vanished, as a warm, human breath, to leave not a trace upon the translucid surface of the brittle glass. Yet a single passionate blow of hands that are gone could have shivered the delicate fabric into a thousand atoms! Why has fate, unrelenting to humanity, spared you? What secrets do you hold? You have watched the three supreme moments of human life—birth, passion, death. Surely you are symbols of that great question which only eternity will answer.

Yet, I fancy, Ninon's mirror must have told her the truth sometimes; must have seen her bright eyes weep at the inevitable marks Time leaves on even the most transcendent youth. She was lovable, this same frail Ninon; she was not all a courtesan. She was capable of devotion, unselfishness, disinterestedness, tenderness; and, though inconstant, she was not unfaithful.

I opened the window with its blue-green, antiquated panes of glass, and, leaning out in the autumn sunshine, looked down below me upon the scenes that Ninon, in her beauty, witnessed many years ago. Pondering on the past, idly dreaming, I saw all the splendid shadows of those bygone times traverse the little courtyard to mount the stairs which lead to Ninon's yellow room: Condé, Turenne, de Retz, the gaunt and stately cardinal, the dashing Sevigné, Moliére, Lulli; men of the Court, men of the

Church, men of letters, science and art, the long procession, on pleasure bent, come to lay their homage at the feet of the most bewitching woman of her time.

"Ah, Ninon, Ninon," I sighed, and the words were re-echoed by the empty walls, "Ninon, the incomparable! what darkness is made luminous by your dazzling smile? If I could but see you! What a vision of delight might I not carry back to the prosaic, grey world of every day modern life, from this old house, where you have lived and loved!"

A slight hand, laid lightly on my arm, compelled me to turn, at the magnetism of its touch. I was scarcely surprised to see the vision of a lady standing by me. Her gracious shape and fair shoulders were set off to advantage by the richness of a blue brocaded dress, embroidered and caught up with garlands of roses. Her hair was dressed in a loose mass of ringlets at the back of her head, while a quantity of small curls made a frame for her delicate face. Around her white throat, a string of pearls held one of those emerald ornaments we have sometimes seen in our great-grandmothers' jewel boxes. Beneath her skirt, one caught glimpses of wonderful, little, high-heeled, satin shoes. Upon her perfectly formed arms, she wore a pair of long, black mittens, from which peeped rosy fingers. The apparition was so startlingly different from all I had ever seen, the dress was so elaborate, its style so formal that, for a moment, I wondered whether the strange lady were beautiful or not. Yet, when she opened her voluptuous lips to murmur, in tones whose music recalled the faint melancholy of an old spinet; "I am she you would evoke," I was no longer in doubt that one of the most exquisite persons I had ever beheld stood before me. Every word seemed full of grace and meaning, and in each gesture there was the rhythm of a minuet movement, while from her resplendent person there emanated a subtle and lofty fascination that subjugated and held captive.

"Yes," sighed the phantom softly, her eyes lighting with an arch smile; "I am, indeed, that Ninon de Lenclos you have come

here to seek. A hundred biographers have taken my name and acts in vain; the silver thread of my life has been interwoven with a hundred romances and legends. But look you! The story of such a woman as I was, can be told but by herself. How would you have justice done to one who was loved by all men, and whom all women envied! It is not possible. Therefore, to those who would know me, I come, that they may judge me as I was."

Ninon continued musingly: "There is no defending the life of a courtesan. Our arguments must be found in our persons. Was not Phryné's gesture, when she dropped her veil before her judges, more conclusive than the verbal eloquence of all the orators in Greece?" Ninon was indeed convincing.

"But stop!" she cried, "it is already past two o'clock, and, at such an hour, the tapers are lighted in any fashionable house." I did as she bid me, and the room scintillated with light. Mlle. de Lenclos' manner had in it something that imposed obedience to her slightest command; a dignity, imperious but gentle, as of one accustomed to reign. And how wondrous fair she looked, standing there in the blaze of a hundred wax candles!

"My world," she continued, "was divided into two distinct elements—those who loved me, and those who hated me. Sometimes the former became the latter, but that was rare, indeed, for, during my long and complicated career, I made but few enemies. I gave largely, and I received in consequence. Love," continued Ninon authoritatively, "is a fragile tie, a spark sent up to heaven, for the briefest joys are the truest. Surely, pleasure is an aim in life as worthy as ambition, and less injurious to those we meet upon our path. Believe me, we who choose love as a career, are not the least philosophers of life. Is it not the one human illusion that is god-like, for it is immortal, and perpetually reborn from its own ashes. It brings us moments so exquisite that we can well afford to pay for them with hours of sharp regret or bitter pain."

"Where is he who would renounce having loved, even at the cost of suffering? For, those who have really loved know the supreme beauty life can offer. And true beauty is triumphant in this, that its image resists the assault and effacement of Time. Pain, and all that is ugly, fades and vanishes from our memory, but who has forgotten the most beautiful hour of his life? It is of an essence so divine that its colours are eternal."

The twilight had crept into the old room; one by one, the candles I had lighted burnt out. Mlle. de Lenclos' voice grew fainter, and, even as I looked at her, she faded from my sight. I would have retained her; but she, the impersonification of love, like love itself, as I tried to hold her, slipped intangibly from my grasp. I was left alone in the deserted room; left with the memory of her mysterious smile, and a poignant longing to behold again the beautiful creature, who had vanished, I felt, for ever. Her strange, formal grace, rhythmical as a strophe of Alexandrine verse, her bewitching charm, her noble and high-bred air, haunted me with regrets. I thought of the women of our own day, as they would have looked beside Ninon, and I smiled as I pictured the modern female, in drab tweeds and hob-nail boots, clamouring for her rights on a platform before a crowd of jeering roughs.

And again Mlle. de Lenclos' enigmatical and mysterious grace rose before me, as she had murmured in her cadenced tones: "Believe me, those who choose love as a career are not the least philosophers of life."

17TH CENTURY STAIRCASE.

HÔTEL DE SENS

FACING PAGE 177.

CHAPTER XII

"LE MARAIS"

There is no part of Paris where the voice of the past speaks louder than in that old quarter of the Marais, which derived its name from a swamp in which Labienus, Cæsar's lieutenant, all but lost the Roman army in 53 B.C. Drained and cultivated, the marshy ground was enclosed within the great wall built under Philippe-Auguste. The 17th Century found it the most fashionable quarter of the town. But, like most things human, the Marais's glory was followed by its decline; it gradually fell out of mode, and the aristocrats deserted the narrow streets to build their houses along the sunny quays or in the breezy gardens of the Faubourg St. Germain. During the Revolution, the splendid palaces of the Marais were confiscated or sold, and fell into disuse and decay. Stripped of their finery, they have grown to be mere workshops, warehouses, or tenements. All the wholesale industries have found convenient lodgings in the vast rooms where Princes and Ambassadors received Royalty; dealers in bronzes, porcelain merchants, organ builders, glass-blowers; a hundred such busy trades have installed themselves under the richly decorated ceilings, from which gilded nymphs and Cupids once smiled down upon the intrigues and amours of the Grand Monarch's brilliant courtiers. Yet, even in its decadence, it is easy to realise the charm that once endeared the Marais to the worldlings of the 17th Century, and made it the pride of the City. Its intricate streets still hold more

real architectural beauty than any other part of Paris, for neither gold nor genius were spared in raising the magnificent buildings that sprang up by hundreds during the reigns of Louis XIII. and XIV. Every other doorway bears a proud escutcheon; every one of these stately palaces is historical. The mouldly walls have looked impassively upon the long procession of events and their actors; they have seen the gold chariots of great nobles give place to the howling mobs of '93, clamouring for blood. They have echoed to the tramp of Napoleon's legions, and the cries and carnage of the revolutionists of the barricades of July.

The names of the old streets tell us their history and evoke our interest. The Rue du Temple is all that remains of the romantic Knight Templars and their palace. The Rue des Tournelles awakes the memory of the Royal residence of the Kings of the Renaissance period. And such names as "La Rue du Chat qui Pêche," "Rue des Mauvais Garsçons," "Rue des Lions St. Paul," "Rue des Quatre Fils," "Rue des Deux Ecus," "Rue des Francs-Bourgeois," and "Rue des Blancs Manteaux," and scores of others, quaint or curious, have remained in this unprogressive corner of old-world Paris. Here the ducal coaches would crowd on their way to Parliament, or Court, or to and from the beautiful "Place Royale," the heart—as the surrounding Marais was the bone and sinew—of elegant Paris, in the 17th Century. At night, the torches of running link boys would set odd shadows dancing on the tall house fronts, as my Lord Marquis and his lady, sitting stiffly on the velvet cushions of their painted carriage, would roll by majestically, while slashing postillions rattled the swaying coach along the cobble stones, to the detriment of the humble but admiring pedestrians, who would squeeze against the wall to gaze at the great folks as they passed. From some dark corner of the ill-lighted streets, a brigand, as likely as not, was awaiting his chance to assault the passer-by, as befel, one night, to a certain Madame Corneul, on her way home from a rout in the Rue

Francs-Bourgeois. "Unhand me, my friend," cried the old lady cheerily, as a ruffian thrust his hand on her throat; "You'll find neither charms nor pearls to tempt you."

We can see, in the Hotel de Sully, Rue St. Antoine, a specimen of a great noble's house. The old Huguenot favourite of Henry IV., stern Protestant though he might be, was yet no anchorite. Behind the Hotel de Sully was a little house, still existing in the Place des Vosges, where Sully enjoyed many a clandestine revel, and received many a pretty visitor, to whom the great house could hardly have opened its doors. But to be loyal to the King, valiant in battle, and diligent at Mass, was all that the time of Louis XIV. exacted of its noblemen, and doubtless they were no worse than their latter day brothers.

The Hotel de Mayenne, built by du Cerceau, and the Hotel Salé, Rue de Thorigny, are of the same period as the Hotel de Sully, and not less magnificent. The Hotel Lamoignon, Rue Pavée, belonged to Diane de France, a legitimatised daughter of Diane de Poitiers and Henri II. Diane's crescent is carved in the stone work.

But to enumerate all the interesting and splendid relics and historic memories of the Marais, would fill volumes. On every side we see here a noble stairway, there an ancient cloister, while many a door, enriched with armorial bearings, opens on a great courtyard where ragged urchins are playing a game of marbles on the pavement, upon which Kings' favourites or prime ministers have waited, bareheaded, beside the coach door of their sovereign. It is a poor, busy, and industrious population that inhabits all these mansions. Most of the shopping is done in the streets, from those little hand-carts whose vivid coloured array of fresh vegetables and flowers adds just the touch of colour that the grey streets of Paris seem to need. The vendors' cries fill the air with their quaint song, and the passers-by jostle one another amiably, with many a familiar word and laughing sally. Gaiety and good nature are characteristics of the crowds that throng the Marais; the whole atmosphere

WELL, HOTEL DE SENS.

is sympathetic, and even the homely smells of the district have a savoury old-world flavour.

In the Place de L'Ave Maria stands the Hotel de Sens, built by Tristan de Salazar, for the Archbishop of Sens, in 1474. It was inhabited by successive Cardinals and Bishops, and also by Marguerite de Valois, the divorced wife of Henri IV., known as "La Reine Margot." When the Queen's favourite page, Julien, was murdered by a rival lover, the Comte de Vermond, "Margot" abandoned the Hotel de Sens. During the Revolution, it became the office of the Lyons coaches, and is associated with the tragic mystery of the "Lyons Mail," which has been reproduced in the well-known play of that name.

On the 27th of April, 1796, the post started, as usual, on its long road, carrying 15,000 francs in specie, and 7,000,000 in assignats, the paper money of the time. As the diligence rattled over the Bridge of Pouilly, near Melun, about nine in the evening, four mounted horsemen appeared, and before the frightened postillion, Audebert, could whip on his tired nags, he fell from his seat, shot through the head. The conductor was seized, and assassinated without mercy. Two women, who were passengers were allowed to escape uninjured. Laborde, another passenger, evidently an accomplice, disappeared in the confusion. The highwaymen were traced, captured, and proved undoubtedly guilty. A few days after the crime, a young man of irreproachable reputation—Joseph Lesurques—happened to enter the police office with a friend who had business there. Two women were waiting to see the Judge; as Lesurques entered, they started and whispered together. They disappeared into the Judge's private room, and, a moment afterwards, to his astonishment, Lesurques was told that he was required by the Judge. He had no sooner crossed the threshold than he was seized and arrested, charged with being an accomplice in the crime of the Lyons Mail. The women, who had been whispering in the waiting-room, were called as witnesses to testify to the robbing of the diligence. Deluded by the coincidence of an

extraordinary likeness, they had denounced Lesurques to the Judge. The unlucky man protested his innocence in all matters pertaining to the robbery. Rich, a man of position and family, he would have had no motive in risking his life and honour in a vulgar crime. But the more he tried to exculpate himself, the more inexorable the Judge became. Not all his friends and family's influence could prevent Lesurques from being brought to trial. The criminals swore, one and all, to having never laid eyes upon him before, but the unfortunate young man was unable to establish an alibi. He was condemned on mere circumstantial evidence, and guillotined. He met his fate with perfect calmness and courage, protesting up to the moment of his death his absolute innocence.

In the Rue de Sévigné is the Hotel Carnavalet, built by Jacques de Lignerais, in 1550, under the direction of Jean Goujon. It is here that the Marquise de Sévigné spent the last twenty years of her well-filled life. It was from her dear "Carnavalette," as she called it, that she poured fourth volumes of those sprightly letters, which have remained such precious documents of her time. The Municipality of Paris has had the fortunate idea of preserving the Hotel Carnavalet as a museum of Revolutionary and Parisian relics. To enter the old rooms and to pore over the contents of their curious cases is to wander in a house of precious memories. There is something very startlingly unreal in the realities of the past. We grow to treat history as legend rather than truth, we forget that humanity has been capable of committing the crimes and violences which have left so little imprint on our own time. It is perhaps a salutary lesson to realise sometimes that legend and truth are one, and there are few more poignant ways of doing so than to study these strange, touching documents, which, from the wrecks of centuries, have been thrown upon the sands of the present. Of all frames, there could be no more admirable one than the stately and beautiful Carnavalet. As we stand before a great fire roaring in the wide grate, we can fancy that, in a moment,

56, RUE DE LA VERRERIE

the witty, kindly Sévigné will trip in to join us, fresh from the "Place Royale" or the "Marais," where she has gathered no end of delightful gossip.

Here is the desk at which she wrote, here the room of the good Abbé Corbinelli, who occupies such a place in her letters. And here the little apartment, so lovingly prepared for her beloved daughter, the Marquise de Grignan. As the case of an old Stradivarius violin is resonant with the harmony of all the melodies born in its fragile body, so the wood of these walls must be mellow with the wit and laughter of the "Grand Siècle." The very silence is replete with fine sayings; there is the rustle of brocade and the click of red heels in every creak of the polished floor. Rooms have a personality of their own. They are not what we make them, but what they become through those whose atmosphere they absorb. So the Marquise's "Carnavalette" is an aristocrat to its very beams, and on the time-worn face of stone there lies the conscious dignity of innate nobility.

At No. 11, Rue de Sévigné, an unpretentious "Etablissement de Bains" occupies the site of the "Théatre du Marais," built by Beaumarchais. It leans upon a rude and massive wall, that of the "Prison de la Force," at whose door the Queen's friend, the beautiful Princesse de Polignac, was massacred. From the gloomy walls, now demolished, thousands of innocent victims went forth to the guillotine.

It is only on looking over an old map of Paris that we realise the quantity of religious orders the city once harboured. At every few paces, there rose the blank wall of a convent or seminary. The Revolution swept most of these communities away, especially the smaller ones, of which there were hundreds. The little cloister belonging to the Carmes Billettes is a remnant of a 15th Century building. The chapel alongside, dating from 1754, was built on the site of a house in which the Jew, Jonathus, was condemned for having burned the body of God, by throwing a holy-wafer into the fire.

THE RUE TAILLEPAIN.

The present is unpitying to the past, and plants an arrogant foot upon decaying beauty. Those charged with the Municipal reforms of streets and quarters have little love of the picturesque, or they would be less keen on the destruction of many of the old streets and buildings, which give so much character to certain parts of the town. It seems that the fate of those two delightful streets of the Middle Ages, the Rues Taillepain and Brisemiche, is even now in the balance. They date from the Middle Ages, and owe their names to the bakeries of the chapter of St. Merri, which were lodged in them. Under Louis XI. they were the headquarters of a certain class of the population. There is still a hook in the wall marking the place of the chain that was drawn across the street at night. The Rue de la Verrerie, just alongside, was so named from the Guild of the glass painters, who were established there in 1187.

All these tortuous, twisting little thoroughfares of the Middle Ages, hardly bigger than a passage-way of to-day, and in which two men can just walk abreast, served as strongholds for the revolutionists of the time of Louis Philippe. It was easy enough to rip up the rough cobble stones and form them into barricades, and the bell of Saint Merri was the tocsin that called the revolutionists to arms. As it rang out, the old streets poured forth an eager army of volunteers, ready to defend to the last gasp their improvised forts. On the evening of the 5th of June, 1832, the whole centre of Paris, especially the Marais, was bristling with barricades. All night long the fighting lasted, and, one by one, the positions were captured by municipal troops. As daylight dawned, it revealed a horrible scene of havoc and confusion. Streets were torn open, and corpses lay in every direction, as they had fallen, fighting desperately, hand to hand. On the walls of the houses, the mark of musket or cannon ball had bitten savagely into masonry or plaster, while doors and shutters hung dejectedly on one hinge, and windows, shattered and gaping, stared blankly from the abandoned house-fronts. Before the Church of Saint Merri, an immense barricade,

THE RUE BRISEMICHE

stoutly defended by a desperate handful of men, was held doggedly, notwithstanding all the efforts of the troops to capture it. Ten times they had summoned the revolutionists to surrender, and ten times the latter had answered with a shout of derision and a murderous shower of grape and canister. The men who defended the barricade seemed as indifferent to death as the grey walls of the old church above them were indifferent to the rain of bullets pattering on the gothic stone. And ceaselessly, gloomily, the tocsin tolled, as though chanting the requiem of those who fell, enemies, yet brothers!

To look at the busy, peaceful quarter now, we can hardly believe it could ever have been roused to such violence and enmity. The grim story of the barricades is a dim legend to these men and women, whose chief preoccupation in life is their daily breadwinning, and who look up, with wondering eyes, at the artist who sits sketching under the shadow of the old church of St. Merri, when he might use his brush to paint the glories of the Champs Elysées or the Boulevards. All these palaces and memories of the Marais are passed daily by the unconscious inhabitants of the quarter, ignorant of, and indeed wholly indifferent to, the fact that they are stepping amongst historical stones. It is not they who will waste a minute over the splendid Hotel de Beauvais, designed by Lepautre, for an ennobled and enriched confidential maid of Anne of Austria, to whom the Queen had entrusted the amorous education of her young son, Louis IV. The great King remained on the friendliest of terms with this middle-aged, cross-eyed Griselda, and often returned to visit her in the residence she had built with the enormous fortune she owed to her intimacy with the Royal family. She was supposed to know more State secrets than the Cardinal himself. At least, she showed herself to be a woman of remarkable taste; for it is hard to find a more harmonious and graceful style of architecture than that she adopted for her house in the Rue St. Antoine, now Rue François Miron. It seems a fitting frame for the young Mozart, who lived

CLOISTER. RUE DES ARCHIVES 25.

FACING PAGE 188.

there when he came, as a child prodigy, to Paris, to astonish the world with his precocious genius.

Near the Rue François Miron is the sinister little Rue des Barres, named after the Hotel des Barres, belonging to Louis de Boisredon, that lover of Isabeau de Bavière, whom her husband, Charles IX., had thrown into the Seine, sewed in a sack, upon which was written "Laissez passer la Justice du Roy." It was to the Rue des Barres, amid the cries of the populace and the flare of smoking torches, that Robespierre, the younger, was brought, bleeding and wounded, after having jumped from the window of the Hôtel de Ville, on the night of the 9th of Thermidor. On that evening, Robespierre, Couthon, St. Just and a few partisans were assembled in a decisive conclave at the Hôtel de Ville. A few hours before, Tallien's violent onslaught had gained the Convention, and overthrown the tyrant's power. The Assembly had pronounced against Robespierre and his party. It was here they had met to decide upon the course of action that remained open to them. Each felt that his destiny hung in the balance. St. Just, beautiful as a demoniacal angel, stood calmly contemplating the fallen chief. Robespierre was indeed unlike himself. Evidently under the influence of violent emotion, he talked incoherently, moved nervously, and showed, by his disordered dress and dishevelled hair, how little any thought of the moment found place in his mind. His thin lips twitched convulsively in the unpleasant grimace which Mirabeau had likened to that of a cat who had drunk vinegar. Couthon, the paralytic, leaning forward in his rolling chair, vomited insult upon insult on the man who, a few hours before, had been the master of all those present.

Suddenly the fallen tyrant raised his head, and seemed to rouse himself for action. All was not lost, he argued; defeated by the Convention, he remained powerful with the Committees of the Sections and the people. With the aid of these, he would surround and seize the National Assembly, paralyse his enemies, and regain the reins of Government. His calculations were

THE RUE DE L'HOTEL DE VILLE.

well founded, for he was still intensely feared, and not one of his political opponents was his equal in intellect and energy. The Tribune's fire roused and subjugated his adherents. The partisans ceased their quarrelling, and set to work to write a proclamation to the people. The others had signed, and Robespierre's hand, still trembling, had traced the three first letters of his name, when the door was burst open with violence, and a municipal guard advanced to where Maximilien sat before the table. There was a rapid interchange of words, and before the others realised what was happening, the young officer had fired point-blank at Robespierre's head. He fell heavily forward on his arms, his jaw bone smashed by a ball from Meda's pistol. In a moment the room was crowded with municipal troops. Seeing the lion fallen, the crowds seized him with the rage of long delayed revenge. Robespierre's partisans were arrested. Lebas shot himself. Robespierre, the younger, jumped from a window and broke his thigh in his attempt to escape. Couthon, the paralytic, was powerless to move, and the superb and terrible St. Just, disdaining any attempt at defence, glanced with haughty indifference at his captors, as they led him with the others to meet that summary justice which Robespierre and his creatures had dealt to thousands of innocent men, women, and children. It was in the old Rue des Barres that the angry crowds gathered, and as we traverse that now quiet street it is impossible not to evoke the culminating drama of that fearful night of Thermidor.

But our pen could ramble on, blackening pages with the memories which every one of the streets of the Marais evoke. Here, as in life, tragedy and comedy are to be found side by side, and, as we look at the crumbling walls, the men and women of bygone times awake and take possession of their long-abandoned habitations to tell us their story. And yet this evocation is a dangerous drug. One must use it with moderation, for the past paralyses the present. But sometimes, when that present pushes us too rudely, it is salutary to let our

fancy loose in the glades of bygone centuries, and trace back to its mysterious source the rapid current of events.

TABLE ON WHICH ROBESPIERRE WAS THROWN WOUNDED ON THE 9TH THERMIDOR.

THE END OF THE "ILE DE ST. LOUIS."

CHAPTER XIII

THE "ILE ST. LOUIS"

There are few quarters of Paris that have remained as full of charm as the Ile St. Louis. It is untouched by the 19th Century spirit of improvement which has razed the old houses of its neighbour, the "Ile de la Cité," and has taken from the environment of Notre Dame the confused picturesqueness of clustering, irregular roofs, above which the giant Cathedral towered supreme. The Ile St. Louis, more fortunate, has kept its old-world aspect, and air of quiet. Its pavements are uneven, its streets narrow and unfrequented, free from the clatter and discord of commerce; while its shady "quais," lined with rows of breeze-stirred poplars, throwing quivering shadows into the green water below, give it a delightful air of retirement and privacy. It is a fitting frame in which to evoke pictures of the past, a spot where even the busiest feel tempted to pause, and dream away an hour beside the flowing river. And, indeed, the tranquil little island has long been the haunt of poets, painters, and all those to whom colour and outline are dear, and who willingly sacrifice the rush of the present for the peaceful past, that, even in its decay, is harmonious and full of beauty. As a matter of fact, the occupation of the Ile St. Louis is comparatively recent. Until the reign of Louis XIII., there was not a house on the Island, which was known as "l'Ile aux Vaches," on account of its rich grazing pastures, belonging to a neighbouring community of monks, who were

proprietors of the land. During the Middle Ages, the townspeople had permission to use the Island as a feast ground, and crowds gathered around the booths and May-poles, to dance under the grateful shade of the tall poplars.

In 1315, Philippe le Bel had the "Ile aux Vaches" decorated with carpets, banners, and tents to receive his English visitor, King Edward the Third, in whose honour he prepared a banquet of unusual magnificence. There were merry jousts, and games of strength and skill, and, to wind up the entertainment, a pageant, with scenes from the New and Old Testaments—Pilate washing his hands before the people of Jerusalem, the Martyrdom of John the Baptist, Adam and Eve, before and after their banishment from the Garden of Eden. The naïve chronicler of the time, who is loud in his praises of the sumptuous spectacle and costumes, does not tell us what were those in which Adam and Eve appeared, before their sin had driven them to adopt the classic dress of fig leaves!

In 1614, a rich bourgeois, Christopher Marie, associated with the treasurer of the King's Swiss Guard, Legrattier, undertook to buy the Island, and to build bridges to connect it with the opposite banks. It was no small affair to open a street in those days. "Trésorier Général," Prevôts," "Conseillers," and scores of others, must gather and deliberate before the privilege was accorded. Poulletier, the King's Secretary, joined with Marie and Lagrattier in the scheme, and the King, Louis XIII., and his mother, formally laid the corner stone of the first bridge, and pronounced the Island open. But the stones and building material of the contractors were waylaid, and diverted to another purpose, and it was some time before the plans were carried out and the new colony arose. The Island took its present name from the existing Church of St. Louis, begun as a chapel in 1622, by Nicolas Lefèvre, enlarged in 1664, sold at the time of the Revolution, and re-opened in 1817.

In reality the "Ile St. Louis" is composed of two small islands, which were originally divided by a narrow creek that

ran where the Rue Poulletier now exists, and was filled up at the time when building began. During the 17th and 18th Centuries, numerous splendid houses sprang into existence along the quais of the Island. Financiers, magistrates, and nobles, were all anxious to live in the new and fashionable quarter, which became known as the "enchanting Isle." Amongst the artists who have lived here, in our own century, we find such names as George Sand, Théophile Gautier, Baudelaire, Meissonier, Corot, Daubigny, and a host of minor luminaries.

At the extreme upper end of the Island, No. 5, "Rue St. Louis," stands the Hôtel Lambert, built by the celebrated architect Levau. Le Brun painted its galleries, and Lesueur decorated its salons, through which generations of beauty and wit have passed and repassed.

Madame du Châtelet, whom Voltaire named "La Docte Uranie," reigned at the Hôtel Lambert over a circle in which Voltaire himself was the principal adorer. The splendid ceilings have echoed to the great philosopher's shrill and pitiless irony, to the discussions of the encyclopædists, the licentious "bons mots" of the débauchés of the Regency, and the arch coquetteries of the beauties of the 18th Century. Later, the house was lost, in a night's gambling, by its then owner, M. Dupin de Chenonceaux. The tidal wave of the Revolution came here, as elsewhere, to sweep all before it, and the noble structure like its noble patrons, saw days of adversity and disaster. The house was dismantled, the paintings were torn from the walls they had so long ornamented, and some emigrated as their owners had done; a few, fortunately, found their way eventually to the Louvre. A mattress factory took possession of the halls where beauty and genius had revelled, and rows of hard-worked, sordid women sat sewing coarse linen in the rooms which Le Brun and Van Ostade had so floridly decorated. Later on a Polish nobleman, Prince Czartoriski, bought the Hôtel Lambert, and rescued it from imminent destruction, so that it remains, restored to some of its pristine splendour, a

superb specimen of the architecture and taste of the 17th Century.

Almost beside the Hôtel Lambert, No. 5, Quai d'Anjou, is a house with a curious little balcony over the entrance. It was inhabited by Madame de Pompadour's brother, and must often have seen the beautiful Marquise pass beneath its doorway, dressed in the puffed and panier silks to which she left her name. What would one not give to be able to draw from the blind old stones the pictures they once beheld?

At No. 17, Quai d'Anjou, we read, in gold letters, carved over the shady doorway looking towards the river, "Hôtel de Lauzun." The house, one of the most beautiful now existing, was built for the financier, Gruyn des Bordes, in 1650. Gruyn, like many another successful man, was the son of a tavern-keeper. His father had owned the famous "Pomme de Pin" in the Rue de la Licorne, in the "Cité," which, in honour of its literary clients, had been dubbed "L'Académie Joyeuse." Charles Gruyn, not wishing to succeed his father in the business, sold his succession to Boileau. He became prosperous, married a rich widow of the Cité, and, as it was the fashion for successful men of finance to own a house in the Ile St. Louis, he bought a lot, and built. However, after a few years of great prosperity, he became entangled in the fortunes and subsequent failure of Fouquet, and was obliged to sell, in 1657, to Antoine Nompar de Caumont, Count—afterwards Duc—de Lauzun.

Lauzun, the third son of a noble, though needy, Gascon family, had been sent to Paris, at the age of fourteen, to seek his fortunes in the Suite of the Maréchal de Gramont, a cousin of his father. Small, insignificant, even somewhat ridiculous in appearance, badly educated and poor, he had not been born a Gascon for nothing. In a few months, not only had he pushed his way into his cousin's good graces, but his puckered little face, frizzled hair and bright eyes were to be seen everywhere about the Court, in the houses of the great, even in the Royal

THE HÔTEL LAMBERT.

FACING PAGE 196.

ante-chamber. From the ante-chamber to the King's good grace was but a step for the sharp-witted, ready Southerner. At twenty-four years of age, to the surprise of everyone, Lauzun was given the command of a regiment. Favours and benefits denied to older and worthier applicants were showered on him. He accepted all gifts of fortune as his due, with an insolence and arrogance worthy of a prince of the realm.

He was feared for his caustic wit, and respected for daring where others quailed. With the Marquise de Montespan he was on the most intimate terms, and never hesitated to use her to serve his own interests. The insatiable little intriguer had put it into his head to obtain the nomination of Grand Master of Artillery, a post usually reserved for the highest in the Kingdom, and one to which Lauzun certainly had no claims. Louvois, the Prime Minister, though aware of the King's desire to please his favourite, opposed Lauzun, and Louis XIV., notwithstanding his partiality towards the young Gascon, was unwilling to offend his Minister, whom, at bottom, he knew to be in the right. Lauzun, accordingly, addressed himself to the Marquise de Montespan to further his cause, and she agreed to solicit the King in his favour at her next interview. Lauzun had induced the Marquise's waiting woman to allow him to introduce himself in her mistress's bed-chamber, where, hiding himself under the bed, he patiently waited the hour of the King's visit. True to her promise, Madame de Montespan, soon after her Royal lover's arrival, turned the conversation to Lauzun and his ambitions, but what was the hidden listener's annoyance to hear his supposed friend and advocate draw, with a great deal of wit and malice, such an unfavourable portrait of himself that the King was set roaring with laughter, while the unlucky Courtier lay fuming in his hiding place, not daring to disclose himself, though literally shaking with rage.

As the Marquise left her apartments, dressed for the ball that was about to take place in the "Galerie des Glaces," she found the Comte de Lauzun waiting to conduct her. He

offered his arm, and, somewhat stiffly, asked her if he had not been forgotten in her interview with the King. Madame de Montespan answered by giving a list of all the services she had rendered the Count. Lauzun allowed her to finish, and then gave way to such fury and volleys of abuse that the favourite all but fainted: nor could she conjecture how her conversation had been carried back, word for word. Not content with maltreating the favourite, Lauzun took his grievances to the King himself, and, with a boldness and insolence astonishing enough from a Courtier, in that age of servility, he broke his sword in the Royal presence, crying that he was unwilling to serve so ungrateful a master. Louis' conduct, during this strange scene of violence, has always been remembered. He opened the window and threw out his cane, saying "that he did so to avoid breaking it on the back of a noble and a servitor." But, tolerant as the King had remained, the next morning found Lauzun at the Bastille. One did not beard the Grand Monarch with impunity! The Court imagined Lauzun disposed of, and congratulated itself on being rid of him, when, at the end of a very short time, what was the astonishment of all to see the insolent little Gascon quietly make his reappearance, high in the Royal favour again, and declaring that a prison was better than Versailles, and the Bastille a delightful sojourning place, where the fare was excellent, and the library most instructive.

It was at this time that he captivated the already mature heart of Anne Marie Louise d'Orleans, cousin of the King, familiarly known as "La Grande Mademoiselle." Born in 1627, she was six years older than Lauzun. One of the richest heiresses in Europe, she had imagined that she would share the throne of France. Successively disappointed in her matrimonial hopes, by Louis XIV., Philippe III. of Spain, and the Emperor Ferdinand, she had thrown herself into the War of the Fronde, where, for a time, she figured as a successful généralissimo. But her military glory did not last long, and, reduced to submit to the Royal authority, she was relegated in

disgrace to her estates at Eu. It was only after years of punishment for her rebellious spirit, that Louis XIV. recalled her to Court, to take her place as a Princess of the blood, and to serve as a satellite in his all-absorbing constellation. The mingled arrogance and servility of Lauzun's attitude seems to have specially adapted him to win the affection of Royal masters.

In person he was far from being either attractive or imposing. Abnormally small, yet not without an air of distinction, his carelessness and eccentricity of dress often bordered on slovenliness. Acerb and bitter, he was disliked and feared for the sharpness of his tongue, which was ready on all occasions to serve him as an arm against his many enemies. His desire to have the "grand air," and his taste for strange accoutrements, often rendered him absurd, as when he would receive visits dressed in a scarlet cloak, a perruque, over that a night cap, and, crowning all, a plumed hat—and woe to those who dared to venture a smile, which he was as quick to perceive as to resent and punish. Lauzun, though a good friend, was an unreasoning enemy, and, even where he was devoted, he could be strangely ungrateful.

Such was the personage that La Grande Mademoiselle chose as the object of her affections: yet she, who had fought battles, was loath to acknowledge, even to herself, the possibility of such a quick and complete surrender to a man whose character and reputation were none of the best, who had lived too much in the glare of courts for his faults not to be well known, and who, though of an old and distinguished family, was a mere gentleman by birth, and no fitting partner for the first Damsel of the Realm. She was, at first, alarmed and dismayed at her obsession, but she was not one to stop at half measures, and soon made up her mind that Lauzun must know and share her sentiments. Strangely novice at the game of love, though she lived in a court where intrigue was the chief occupation, it was not without difficulty that she decided on a plan of action. The wily Gascon had no doubt seen through Mademoiselle's

mask of sighs and elderly blushes, yet, though alive to the advantages of such a union, as a means to serve his advancement at Court, he affected coldness, and acted the part of a disinterested friend. At last it was the sentimental spinster, more and more in love, who declared herself, and, by her tears and pleading, from the King even won a doubtful consent to her marriage. It seemed as though, for once, however, Lauzun was wanting in the aplomb of which he was such a past master. The honour was too great, and inspired hesitation in the mind of the courtier. The King, above all, was to be conciliated; the King who, notwithstanding the affection he bore his favourite, accepted with but lukewarm enthusiasm the idea of receiving him into the Royal circle.

So the comedy went on, while Mademoiselle indulged, by turns, in violent attacks of nerves or lovesickness. The people of Paris ended by solving the difficulty, declaring themselves opposed to the union of a Princess of the House of Bourbon with a simple Gascon gentleman. It is not known if there was a secret marriage, though every indication, except the actual, written proof of the ceremony, exists. Lauzun's attitude towards la Grande Mademoiselle became rather that of a master than a courtier, and she was completely under the dominion of the little man, who grew more insolent, violent, and spoilt than ever. But a flame kindled even in the heart of a maid of forty-two, may die out. Finally, the scenes and tyrannies of Lauzun tired the heroine of the Fronde, who sadly came to the conclusion that the pleasures and joys of domestic life are denied by destiny to the great. La Grande Mademoiselle retired, this time voluntarily and alone, to her Château d'Eu, to spend the remaining years of her life. She died at the Palais du Luxembourg on the 18th of April, 1693, and all the town crowded to her funeral. The unconscious burlesque that had been her life did not end with her demise, for, in the middle of the funeral mass at St. Denis, the urn containing her mortal remains

exploded with a dreadful noise, and the horrified congregation rushed in dismay from the church.

Lauzun, who had distinguished himself meanwhile by bringing James II. of England to France, and was high in Court favour, attended the funeral ceremony dressed in deep mourning, and, to emphasize the fact that he had been married, made an offer, the very next day, for the hand of the Duc de Lorge's daughter. His young wife accepted him, thinking soon to be a rich widow, but he only died in 1723. Even at eighty years of age, when riding one day in the Bois de Boulogne, he excited Louis XV.'s admiration by his skill as a horseman. Such a strange figure as Lauzun could have existed only in the time of the "Grand Monarque"; he was a typical product of the Court of Versailles, a curious example of the courtier, and favourite, mingling servility and insolence, pride and humility, honour and scheming, disinterestedness and cupidity.

The house that he prepared for the reception of the heiress of Gaston d'Orleans is still decorated with the sumptuous golds upon golds of the style of Versailles. In 1723, it was bought by the Marquis de Richelieu, a nephew of the Cardinal, one of the most licentious and profligate men of the Regency. He began his career of amorous adventure by stealing his fourteen-year-old bride from the convent where she had been placed after their marriage, according to the fashion of the day. The story served long afterwards for the plot of the comic opera of "Le Petit Duc." Richelieu, who rapidly tired of everything he possessed, sold the Hôtel de Lauzun, to move to the opposite bank of the Ile St. Louis. The proprietors who succeeded him were P. T. Ogier, the Marquis de Tessé, and the Marquis de Pimodan, brigadier of the King's armies, who remained quietly in occupation of his residence during the Revolution, refusing, unlike most of his order, to emigrate. The Revolutionary Comité ordered his arrest, and the old nobleman had his gala coach harnessed to drive him to prison. The advent of the 9th of Thermidor came just in time to save his head, and restore him

OLD STAIRWAY, QUAI DE BETHUNE.

to the proprietorship of the Hôtel de Pimodan, as it was then called. Finally, after changing hands, the house was bought by Baron Jérôme Pichon. The poet Baudelaire occupied the apartments on the second storey, where he installed the black divinity to whom he wrote so many of his poems. It was in his rooms that the famous club of the Haschisch eaters held its midnight meetings. The house is now owned and occupied by the Baron Louis Pichon, and is a wonderful specimen of the lavish decoration of the 17th Century.

Scores of the fine houses in the Ile St. Louis were built by the important Croesus of the time, Poulletier, Hesselin, and others.

No. 18, on the Quai de Béthune, is the house of that Duc de Richelieu, nephew of the Cardinal, who was such a Lothario and lady-killer in his time, and of whom a hundred anecdotes are told in the scandalous Memoires of the 18th Century. The Quai de Béthune was formerly known as the Quai du Dauphin. At the corner of the Rue Bretonvilliers is the Hôtel d'Astray. The apartments bear traces of their ancient splendour. The stairway continued down into the cellar, where a barge, always manned, awaited the pleasure of its rich owner, the financier Comans d'Astray. Pleasure boat and owner have long since been rowed across the river Styx by the grim boatman, who awaits all. Wealth, so omnipotent at the time, is of all the gifts of Destiny the most palpable, and yet the one which leaves least memories. These mighty Princes of Fortune have passed away, and we recall the fact that they existed and wielded immense influence and power, merely by a name faintly graven on the pompous doorway, from which so many supplicants have turned away disappointed. But the gentle names of Daubigny and Corot, who inhabited the Quai d'Anjou in humble lodgings—when will they be forgotten? It is to them that we bow low, as we pass from the quaint, old-world island, with its quiet streets and shimmering poplar shade, back into the dust and roar of the city.

LA FOLIE TITON.

HOTEL CORVISARD. BOULEVARD AUGUSTE BLANQUI.

CHAPTER XIV

A FOLLY

The closing year of the eighteenth century saw great fortunes, rapidly accumulated, dissolve as rapidly. Law and his Mississippi bubble had given the public a taste for speculation; money lost its value, as it does with the gambler, who, when in luck, idly flings a gold piece to a beggar, or, if he loses, borrows from an indigent friend—even to his last penny. In a society about to be swept away, pleasure was a whirlwind which carried all prudence before it. Immense sums were squandered around the green baize of the gambling tables; fortunes changed hands on the race course; extravagant wagers were recklessly offered. and taken; fabulous amounts were spent on gratifying the caprice of an hour.

The King's brother, the Comte d'Artois, leading the fashion in this as in other eccentricities, was first and foremost in the mad rush for amusement. We hear how he built the Château de Bagatelle in the Bois de Boulogne, because he had wagered his young sister-in-law, Marie Antoinette, that he would invite her within sixty-four days to a "fête" in a house perfectly appointed to receive a Queen. An army of workmen was employed, woods were cleared, flowering shrubs planted, lawns laid down. Exactly at the date and hour named, the Prince stood upon the steps of the beautiful pavilion to receive his Royal guests. Every luxury that taste could suggest, and money realize, made the picture a perfect one. The flower beds bloomed as enchantingly as though they had been imported from a land of dreams; the velvet turf

seemed to be the carpet of years of culture. In the house, rare works of art and statues ornamented every corner. The guests, amazed, could scarce believe that in two months a creation of such perfect order and beauty could have sprung into existence in the midst of what had been a wild and deserted forest.

The Prince having set the fashion, the rich nobles, and especially the financiers and farmer-generals, all felt bound to follow the royal lead, and build "a Folly." Huge fortunes were spent in erecting and arranging these festive retreats, which were delicately and suggestively decorated by the first artists of the time. Some even had stages attached, where plays and operas might be given, in which actors and authors were allowed a free rein to represent what would hardly have been tolerated in a theatre to which the public were admitted. So the wind of pleasure blew, precursor of the coming tempest.

Within a short drive from the centre of Paris, nestling amid foliage, bowered in lilacs, and shut in by high walls from the vulgar gaze of the passer-by, these temples of pleasure, like flowers in the night, arose in a hundred directions. The gardener, as he went to protect his early lettuce from the night frosts, would hear the sounds of revelry, the music of fiddles floating from over the high walls into the fields beyond. "Jacques Bonhomme," plodding along the country lane, would be splashed, and all but run down, by the fast horses of the man of pleasure, driving recklessly back to town after a night of debauchery; and the peasant would grind his teeth, with a curse upon his rich neighbour that boded trouble for the future. The rosy milkmaids would stare with wide-eyed surprise and envy at the rattling chariot, bearing away some queen of the opera or ballet; or, maybe, a dishevelled great lady's tired face would gaze for a moment disdainfully from behind the mysterious half-drawn blinds of her coach, as it carried her home from a midnight escapade; for, sick of etiquette and state, the most exclusive and high-born members of the fair sex were eager to mix with and elbow all the vice and folly of the capital. To know

COLONNADE IN THE HOUSE OF CORVISARD.

FACING PAGE 205.

a celebrated actress, to have penetrated into the intimacy of a courtesan, were the strange ambition that a love of sensation had awakened in the breast of many an aristocratic lady of the 18th Century.

Did not the Queen herself go disguised to a masked ball at the opera? and mix with a mad crowd who jostled her at Ranelagh, an open-air pleasure resort, kept by an Irishman named Morison, and frequented by all classes? The scandal was the talk of the town at the time, and filled the dowagers with as much horror as it did the young woman of fashion with envy.

Nor were amusements the only occurrences in these toy pleasure houses. More than one of them was the scene of sinister and tragic events. Such as they were, they lived their brief lives and disappeared, swallowed up by the octopus arms of the growing town. All, or nearly all, have vanished. Yet, here and there, along a modern avenue, shorn of the privacy of its once shady gardens and high walls, through which the modern town has rudely pushed, there stands some graceful pavilion falling to decay, yet retaining in its proportions all the subtle charm of the eighteenth century.

Such an one is "Le Cour Payen," on the Boulevard Auguste Blanquit, built in 1762. Erected by the caprice of some lover of pleasure, for mere purposes of gallant rendezvous, it survived the Revolution and became the residence, during the Empire, of the celebrated physician Corvisard. Here, for years, the good old doctor led his simple, active life; kind to all, honoured by the rich and respected by the poor, to whom he never refused help and advice. Here, after his busy day, he would sit peacefully amid the marble columns of his porch, resting, and enjoying the fresh country breezes blowing from the fields and orchards through which the Biévre then wound its clear course. Now the columns of the porch are awry and falling; the Biévre, throttled and stained by the ugly tanneries along its banks, exists but as a noisome canal, the playground of the poor urchins of the quarter of the Gobelins.

Le Cour Payen served in our day as the atelier of the sculptor Rodin; it was there that he executed his famous statue of Balzac, the cause of such hot artistic discussion and criticism. Le Cour Payen, alas, like so many of its contemporaries, is doomed to disappear. As we walk through the abandoned and ruined house, what phantoms of elegance and fantasy attend us, step by step, along the echoing rooms. What an old world music rings in the falling stones! Born of an age in which pleasure and beauty were supreme rulers of the hour, though it has lived little over a century—a short life for bricks and mortar—the existence of the little pavilion has yet been complete, its cycle well rounded. Following on a youth resounding to folly and festive pleasures came a maturity which sheltered the serenity of noble science, while its declining years have served to frame the poetic dreams of a great artist.

From every direction around the grimy factories frown menacingly down upon their aristocratic neighbour. The resounding axe of the destroyer is cutting the last pear-tree blooming in the old garden which Corvisard loved, soon to give way to rows of sordid tenements or the hideous workshops of the twentieth century. Is the fate of the crumbling walls not almost to be envied? They, at least, will not long survive their graceful past, and will be saved by destruction from the all-absorbing degradation of a utilitarian age.

MADAME DUBARRY'S SLEIGH.

XVTH CENTURY CARVING.

CHAPTER XV

THE MARQUISE DE BRINVILLIERS

The religious ardour of the Middle Ages, which had filled the Calendar with Saints and Martyrs, sent Crusaders to Asia and Africa, and found expression in the stupendous genius of Gothic architecture, was to undergo a reaction during the 17th Century. Black magic and sorcery were but forms of natural mysticism. Throughout centuries, the Church had fostered in her children a habit of submission, that deprived them of the faculty of self-government. It was the Mother Church who thought for them, constituting herself guardian and directress, not only of their spiritual, but of their temporal welfare. Thought and reason are but acquired faculties in the human animal: leave his powers undeveloped, he soon looses them. As the influence of the Church declined, the minds of the masses turned insensibly in other directions. Charlatanism lies dormant in all communities, awaiting only the slightest encouragement to make its appearance. The 17th Century was a propitious one for such a growth, and sorcery, black magic with its foul practices, and every imaginable sort of quackery sprang up like evil fungi in the night, and flourished lustily. It was the energetic and upright spirit of one resolute man that saved France from the power of crime.

Gabriel Nicolas de la Reynie, Louis the Fourteenth's Lieutenant of Police, was a type of the devoted, enlightened and incorruptible magistrate.

Thanks to his honesty, courage, and loyalty, France was purged of the monsters, who not only lived on the public credulity, but were the instigators and executors of a series of horrors and crimes, that threatened not society only, but the throne itself. La Reynie's task was not an easy one; to accomplish it he had to fight against the whole aristocratic class that found itself compromised in the revelations made by the Lieutenant of Police. Such a state of corruption as then existed, seems incredible in a society that prided itself upon being the most enlightened in Christendom.

In the old Rue Charles V., the house yet stands that was the theatre of the Marquise de Brinvilliers' hideous drama. It brings us near the story of one of the world's most celebrated criminal causes. In its quiet side street, the stately "Hôtel de Brinvilliers" has remained through centuries untouched. Tragedy still broods over the place. Its past seems more real than its present. We can fancy Madame de Brinvilliers' golden head thrust from one of the tall windows, as her blue eyes sweep the court-yard, with a haughty inquiry in their wide gaze, at the stranger who dares intrude on the exclusiveness of her aristocratic residence.

But, as we stand looking up at the old, grey walls that hold the secret of many tragedies, we hear the hum of voices floating from the garden beneath, all garlanded with ivy and bright with pots of sweet flowers. In the rooms where the beautiful, inhuman marquise mixed her poisonous doses, meditating fresh iniquities the while, there are now but a few gentle-voiced, black-robed sisters of Mercy, who teach their kindly lessons to the poor children of the quarter.

Marie Madeleine d'Aubray was born the 22nd of July, 1630. She was the eldest daughter of Dreux d'Aubray, Seigneur d'Offémont and de Villiers, Councillor of State, Civil Officer, Lieutenant-General of the mines of France. Marie Madeleine was carefully schooled, but her moral education was sadly neglected; she seems, from early childhood, to have fallen under unfortunate influences.

HOUSE OF MADAME DE BRINVILLIERS.

FACING PAGE 210.

Had she been wisely led, her energy might not improbably have been directed into healthier channels, and she would not have developed that excessive impressionability which converted the smallest slight into an insult, over which her pride brooded for days.

At 21 years of age, Mademoiselle d'Aubray married an officer, Antoine Gobelin de Brinvilliers. The young couple started life with every advantage; both were rich, and occupied distinguished positions in society. In person, the "Marquise" was charming; an oval face crowned by masses of golden hair, a complexion of dazzling fairness, eyes remarkably large, soft and blue, with an intelligent and thoughtful expression. Her manner was lively and playful. Her body, though small, was exquisitely formed, and full of graceful dignity in all its movements. Possessed of decision and character, she expressed herself with ease and judgment, and, unlike most of the women of her time, wrote fluently and correctly. The natural violence of her temper only showed itself in moments of extreme annoyance, when a rapid convulsion would pass like a sombre cloud across the April beauty of the smiling face, leaving it distorted and dark. Such moods were rare, however, as the young Marquise was rather of a sunny nature, and apparently held her passions in control.

The Marquis de Brinvilliers was a gambler, a man of extravagant and dissipated habits, and, apparently, as weak as he was selfish. Amongst the associates that he introduced to his house was a certain Sainte-Croix, captain in a cavalry regiment and a crony of Brinvilliers' in his pleasure parties. The new acquaintance was superior to the Marquis in physical attractions and intellect. Possessing, moreover, extraordinary seductiveness, he was the man of all others to captivate Marie Madeleine, herself remarkably intelligent and fascinating.

Like most married couples of this epoque, the Marquis and Marquise de Brinvilliers were singularly without prejudice. Each allowed the other to lead the life of his choice, without remonstrance or jealousy. It was a curious state of society, and shows

us how little human, at heart, were the grand ladies and gentlemen of the 17th Century. We can have but small real sympathy or understanding with people so far removed from us in all our feelings. To our more earnest generation, their preoccupations seem futile, while their utter absence of sentiment and idealism jars rudely on our more matured and less primitive sensibilities.

Madame de Brinvilliers, unfortunately, was a typical example of the woman of her time. Her father, the Councillor, Dreux d'Aubray, was of other stuff. Indignant at the footing of intimacy on which Sainte-Croix had been received into his son-in-law's household, and at the utter indifference of the Marquis regarding his wife's conduct, Monsieur d'Aubray obtained a "lettre de cachet" against his daughter's love. He was arrested while driving in Madame de Brinvilliers' carriage, and was thrown into the Bastille. Sainte-Croix seems always to have been a man of loose morals, but, before his imprisonment, his conduct had never been open to accusations more serious than—to state the case leniently—a culpable disregard of delicacy in the means by which he obtained sufficient money to meet the expenses of his extravagant way of life.

During his confinement, he made the acquaintance of an Italian who had served with Queen Christina of Sweden. This man was supposed to be versed in the secret of preparing poisons. Sainte-Croix was also intimate with the chemist Glazer, who held the title of apothecary to the King. The officer would often go to Glazer's laboratory and spend hours in his society; it was from these two men that Sainte-Croix learned the receipts he imparted to his mistress and which were generally spoken of between them afterwards as "Glazer's recipes."

On his liberation from the Bastille, Sainte-Croix reappeared at the house in the Rue Charles V. on the same terms of intimacy as before. The unfortunate passion he had inspired in Madame de Brinvilliers' heart had been rendered only more violent by their enforced separation. A feeling of resentment had grown in her towards the father who had thwarted her

STAIRCASE IN THE HOUSE OF MADAME DE BRINVILLIERS.

dearest attachment. Sainte-Croix's dissipations and extravagant habits soon induced him to have recourse, in his difficulties, to a mistress who dared refuse him nothing, and who was wealthy enough to keep his purse replenished. But the very facility with which he obtained money induced him to gamble more heavily, and his demands became so great that the Marquise's fortune was quite inadequate to meet them. But for her unfortunate devotion to such a villain as Sainte-Croix, the Marquise de Brinvilliers, though not a good woman at heart, might, at least, have remained an inoffensive member of society. When an absorbing love takes possession of a woman, her moral sense becomes completely blunted, and she is capable of acts quite foreign to her nature under ordinary circumstances. So it was with Marie Madeleine; she grew to be a mere thing of instinct, with as little thought of others as of self, putting from her every obstacle, surmounting every repugnance, and becoming a fiend incarnate.

It is strange that passion deprives creatures so absolutely of reason, that they can calmly set to work to plan the direct follies, or the foulest crimes. The Marquise de Brinvilliers' resentful nature, which no influence for good had ever softened, saw in her father an obstacle which prevented her from satisfying her passion for Sainte-Croix. The Councillor no longer there, she would be able to give her lover all he asked. It is improbable that the idea of killing her father germinated in her mind alone. It was Sainte-Croix certainly who planted the seed in Madame de Brinvilliers' brain, and facilitated the execution of the crime. The Marquise took to visiting the sick at the hospitals, bringing them cordials, dainties and biscuits, of her own making. But it seemed as if a malignant fate hovered in the wake of the beautiful young woman. Those in whom the Marquise became interested, sickened, and rarely recovered. That year, there were many deaths in the hospital she attended. Finally, the preparatory experiments having succeeded, the Marquise de Brinvilliers got ready to play the great game for which Sainte-Croix had educated her.

After some months of constant indisposition, Dreux d'Aubray's pains increased to such an extent that he determined to try change of air, and moved to his château in the country. His daughter, who soon followed him, installed herself as his companion and nurse, but, a very few days after the Marquise de Brinvilliers' arrival, her father became worse. He was removed again to Paris, but his mysterious malady only grew with every change of domicile, and after great suffering, he died on the 10th of September, 1666. Madame de Brinvilliers confessed later that she had administered 29 or 30 doses of poison to the Councillor during the eight final months of his life.

Marie Madeleine mourned her father with conventional ceremony. But her conduct after his death hardly showed much profound grief.

Nothwithstanding her infatuation and her jealousy of Sainte-Croix, the Marquise took other lovers, though, when she heard that her husband was openly acknowledged as the protector of a certain Mademoiselle Dufay, she gave way to a violent access of rage in which she threatened to kill both Brinvilliers and his mistress. The resources of the couple soon felt the strain of their wasteful habits; the heritage which had come to Marie Madeleine through her father's succession was dissipated. Sainte-Croix's demands were more and more frequent. What had succeeded once could succeed again, and, accordingly, the Marquise now planned to dispose of her two brothers, who had inherited the Councillor's dignities and estates. She placed a creature of hers, a lackey called La Chaussée, in her eldest brother's household; but, as Antoine d'Aubray was younger and stronger than his father, the poisons, prepared with the help of Sainte-Croix, and regularly administered by La Chaussée, were slow to take effect. The unlucky man began to suffer cruelly. Seeing that her scheme was working successfully, Madame de Brinvilliers now began operations on her second brother, and, as the two men were often together her plans were made the easier. Sometimes La Chaussée would make a mistake and give the whole household a

poisoned tart for dinner, yet, strangely enough, no one suspected foul play. Between while, if the behaviour of the servants was unsatisfactory, Madame de Brinvilliers would administer, by way of punishment, a dose which would set the poor wretches squirming with fearful pains. One day, annoyed beyond measure at her daughter's stupidity, she made the child drink arsenic, but, filled with remorse a moment afterwards, gave her an antidote.

By 1667—both brothers being disposed of, after frightful death agonies—the "Marquise" was able to come into an inheritance which left her free to give Sainte-Croix a large sum and remunerate the lackey La Chaussée handsomely for his work. Meanwhile, the wily Sainte-Croix had obtained papers from his mistress that compromised her so utterly that she was completely in his power. She began to comprehend with no small chagrin and mortification that the man she had loved with such passion had used her but as a means whereby to obtain money for his own dissipations. The exclusive and aristocratic Marquise de Brinvilliers was not only an instrument in the hands of a cunning villain, but, to further his ends, had placed herself at the mercy of a low valet who could betray her when it suited his purpose. To obtain La Chaussée's silence, she was forced to treat him with a consideration and indulgence that scandalised those around her. On every side, complications and difficulties arose. Sainte-Croix held possession of the proofs of his victim's guilt, and had locked the same away in a certain casket which he had put in a place of safety out of reach; nor could all his mistress's prayers and entreaties induce him to part with it. Desperate at last, Marie Madeleine sent him, one night, a letter: "I have determined," she said, "to put an end to a life that you have made miserable, by taking the recipe that I have paid so dearly for. You see I sacrifice to you even my very existence." Another day, it was Sainte-Croix, himself, who gave her a dose of arsenic. Warned by the symptoms she had provoked in so many others, Madame de Brinvilliers was able to save herself by drinking large quantities of hot milk. The unfortunate woman seems to have

become possessed by a very demon of poisoning. Did some one displease her, she threatened him with extermination; on one occasion, she insinuated that a box she was carrying contained "a dozen inheritances." She loved to talk of cases of people who had been poisoned, as if the horrible subject was one of particular charm.

Disillusioned on the score of Sainte-Croix, she attached herself to her children's tutor, Briancourt. Gradually, during moments of intimacy, Madame de Brinvilliers revealed her crimes to the young man, who, had he not been paralysed by fear, would have fled from the house of his redoubtable mistress. Sainte-Croix, meanwhile, never ceased frequenting, the family in the Rue Charles V. He assured Briancourt of his interest and protection, particularly recommending one of the children to the tutor's indulgence, as being his own son. The unlucky Briancourt, who was no villain—though a coward—thus became an unwilling party to the Marquise's awful secrets. Madame de Brinvilliers, not satisfied with having disposed of her father and her two brothers, was meditating plans to do away with her sister, Mademoiselle d'Aubray, and her sister-in-law. Briancourt was at least bold enough to warn the two women to be on their guard, and to tell his mistress that he considered her the worst and most cruel woman it had ever been his bad fortune to meet. The Marquise determined to get rid of an admirer, who dared to sermonise her, and to come between her future victims and their fate. She invited the tutor into her room that evening at midnight. As Briancourt went along a gallery at 11 o'clock, he perceived that the curtains of Madame de Brinvilliers' chamber had not been drawn, and, through the window, he saw the shadows of two figures cross the light. Full of suspicion, he drew softly near, and was able, from his position in the gallery, to discern distinctly what occurred in the room. Madame de Brinvilliers was in deep confabulation with an individual, who, notwithstanding his sordid disguise, Briancourt recognised as Sainte-Croix. At the end of half-an-hour, as the

time was approaching when the tutor was to join her, the Marquise pushed Sainte-Croix into a large chimney-place, where he was completely hidden.

Indignant at the perfidy of his mistress, Briancourt knocked. The Marquise opened the door, her face distorted by one of its violent and rapid contortions of rage. She invited her guest to enter, questioning him on his agitation, and putting her arms caressingly around his neck asked him solicitously why he appeared so sad. Briancourt, who suspected foul play, disengaged himself rapidly, and going to the chimney, pulled down the screen that hid Sainte-Croix, crying out "Villain, you are in wait to kill me." Sainte-Croix, thinking that, under the circumstances, prudence was the better part of valour, came from his hiding-place, and disappeared rapidly, without any further explanations, leaving Madame de Brinvilliers to receive the indignant reproaches of the outraged tutor. From this time on, the existence of the poor man was a series of alarms. He lived upon antidotes, in perpetual fear of an attempt on his life. Yet he was without the courage to throw off his obnoxious chains and escape from the proximity of the Marquise and Sainte-Croix, who kept him hypnotised with fear.

Family life at the Hotel Brinvilliers was anything but reassuring. Brinvilliers had been poisoned half-a-dozen times by his wife, and lived in such terror of everything he touched, that he hardly dared break bread in his own house. The Marquise lived in terror of Sainte-Croix's fatal casket, which held all her secrets; the tutor lived in terror of both Sainte-Croix and the Marquise; while Sainte-Croix, himself, lived in terror of not having enough money to meet his morrow's gambling debts.

Madame de Brinvilliers had tried, on various occasions, to dispose of her husband, in order to marry Sainte-Croix; but the latter had no mind to fall in with his mistress' plans, and Brinvilliers was on the watch. If Marie Madeleine administered a dose of poison, Sainte-Croix administered an antidote, until the unfortunate victim, who had been tossed like a shuttlecock from

life to death and back again, half-a-dozen times, ended by falling into the most deplorable condition of health, with a weakness in the legs which left him a cripple for the remainder of his life.

The poor man was obliged to carry on his person a snuff-box filled with an antidote, which he would take as a precautionary measure, and administer to all his household every few days. This extraordinary state of affairs went on for some time, no one daring openly to accuse Madame de Brinvilliers. An autopsy of her two brothers had shown they had met their death by unnatural means, and the fact that the Marquise had not only poisoned them, but her father also, was beginning to be an open secret, though no one dared to accuse her. In the time of Louis XIV., birth and position carried such tremendous prestige with them, that noble people were, in a way, immune from the effects of public opinion. The tutor had managed, at last, to disentangle himself from his onerous service in the Brinvilliers household, and was living in the country, away from his terrible mistress.

The sudden death of Sainte-Croix was to bring things to a climax. He had left instructions that, in case of his death, the fatal casket was to be delivered to Madame de Brinvilliers. But, as he died owing money in every direction, all his personal belongings were seized, the casket among others. His widow immediately informed the "Marquise," who flew to the commissioners to claim it, but they were inexorable. Money was offered, influence used, all to no purpose.

Feeling that her hour had come, Madame de Brinvilliers left Paris hurriedly, giving her lawyer full power to represent her. The casket was opened before witnesses. In it were promises of large sums to Sainte-Croix, compromising letters, and vials which were analysed and found to contain poison. The affair became the one topic of Paris. Tongues were at last let loose, and a hundred stories repeated of the Marquise's mysterious doings, her visits to Glazer's laboratory in company with Sainte-Croix, the threats she had so often let fall. The list of her victims was exaggerated by popular

rumour, until she was accredited with having poisoned half the town.

Antoine Dreux d'Aubray's widow heard the accusations made against her sister-in-law. She arrived in Paris post-haste, and demanded that La Chaussée, the former valet, should be arrested immediately. She brought proofs of her husband's, brother-in-law's, and father-in-law's unnatural deaths. La Chaussée was found and put to "the question of the boots," as it was called, which consisted in squeezing the feet and legs in a series of planks screwed together. The lackey showed extraordinary fortitude, and remained silent during his torture. But when he was brought to himself by restoratives, and placed upon a couch before the fire, he was taken with contrition and announced that he would confess everything. He did so, and the Marquise de Brinvilliers was completely compromised. Neither influence nor rank could now prevent an order for her arrest being issued. The King himself gave instructions that on no consideration was the working of justice to be stopped. La Chaussée was condemned to be publicly drawn and quartered.

Meanwhile, Madame de Brinvilliers had fled to England. A special convoy was sent over, requesting Charles the Second to operate an arrest; but, owing to the laws of extradition, some time was lost, and the "Marquise" was able to escape. From England, she crossed into the Low Countries where she roamed from town to town, wanting the barest necessities, and in perpetual fear of capture. She had begged her husband to join her, but Monsieur de Brinvilliers, who was tranquilly installed in the country house which Marie Madeleine had inherited from her brothers, had no mind to move. "She will try to poison me again," he said plaintively, and remained where he was.

Finally, at Liège, where she was in hiding, the Marquise de Brinvilliers was captured and brought to Paris. On the road the unhappy woman tried to commit suicide in several horrible ways; but she, who had made away with so many others, was unable to take her own life, her vigorous nature resisting every effort of

self-destruction. She essayed bribes to induce her guardians to allow her to escape, and managed to let her servants (who, strangely enough, were devoted to her) know that she was imprisoned. They attempted, ineffectually, to rescue her. Eventually, she arrived in Paris, having carefully thought out on the road her plan of defence.

The Marquise de Brinvilliers' rank and birth entitled her to claim judgment in the highest courts of the realm. The evidence against her was damning. Her course of action was to deny everything. "It is a nature that fills us with terror," said her judges. Her self-possession never gave way, she showed no sign of emotion, as fact upon fact of her past was proved against her. Her depraved childhood, her immoral youth, her crimes were evoked; all the acts of her life were enumerated. She did not flinch, nor tremble, nor show the slightest weakness. She denied any knowledge of poison. Her delicate head held high, she fixed the judges with the gleam of her large blue eyes, until her accusers showed more emotion than their prisoner, and consternation was written on the faces around her. Finally Briancourt appeared, and was sworn in to make his deposition. He did so, his voice broken by sobs. The tutor's evidence was conclusive, and left no doubt in the minds of his auditors. "Madame," he cried, as he ended, "I have warned you a hundred times that the cruelty and disorder of your life would ruin you." His former mistress looked at him contemptuously, and merely remarked icily, in her slow well-bred tones: "You have but little heart, for you are weeping." The stony face of the Marquise de Brinvilliers never changed its expression when her judges condemned her to bear the "question extraordinary," which she knew to be the most painful torture inflicted. She was told that a confessor would be sent to her, and she was dismissed, the Court remaining to deliberate.

The man who was chosen to attend Madame de Brinvilliers was l'Abbé Pirot, a professor of La Sorbonne, a man of ardent faith, extremely intelligent and sensitive, and gifted with

remarkable psychological insight. Pirot has left a detailed account of his intercourse with the Marquise de Brinvilliers during the last days of her life. The priest was taken to the room in one of the towers where the prisoner was lodged. He entered, and, to his surprise, was greeted by a small, delicately-built lady, who rose to receive him. Her eyes, of a cerulean blue, large and limpid, met the priest's gaze frankly. She thanked Pirot gratefully for his visit, saying she imagined he was the spiritual director the President Lamoignon had sent to her. Pirot answered in the affirmative, adding he had come to render what help he might to the accused, only wishing that it had been under other circumstances that they met.

"Sir," replied the Marquise gently, "One must be resigned to meet the worst."

She turned to a priest, who was beside her, and thanked him graciously, saying: "Adieu, my father, I would now be left to this gentleman, for I must treat with him of matters that demand we should be alone." Madame de Brinvilliers at once gained the good Pirot's confidence and indulgence. "I will make you a complete confession of my life," she said with sincerity, and the priest seized that opportunity of begging her to make a full confession also of the means she had used, and the accomplices who had helped her in the execution of her crimes.

"Are there no sins so great that they are denied pardon?" asked Marie Madeleine, anxiously.

"None," replied the priest with conviction; and the prisoner sighed, as though a weight had been removed from her soul.

Gradually, the powerful and sympathetic influence of the Abbé drew from the miserable woman the history of her life from infancy upward. The benign effect of Pirot's pity and commiseration softened Marie Madeleine, and her heart melted as in a crucible. The tale she unfolded was a terrifying one, yet it evoked all the priest's immense compassion. Before receiving her final confession, Pirot retired to pray and ask guidance in the church adjoining the prison. Strengthened in his charity, he

said Mass and rejoined the Marquise de Brinvilliers in her room above. He found her awaiting him, serene and very gentle. At that moment they came to read the prisoner the verdict which the jury had just returned. It was death. She heard the sentence with perfect composure. "It is better so," she said quietly, "I can only gain salvation now by death at the hand of the executioner. I have protested innocence, thinking that it would be impossible for the judges to condemn me. Since the verdict has been unfavourable, I will make a full confession of my crime. Pray excuse me to the President. See him after my death, and tell him that I imagined my attitude would serve my defence. I have been touched by grace, however, owing to this good man."

When dinner was served, she begged her two guardians, one of whom was a personal attendant, to sit and share her last repast. Turning to her maid, she asked pardon for the trouble she had so often given her. "To-morrow you will be free of me," she said, "you must go to your home in the country, for I doubt not your heart is too kind to wish to see me executed."

While those to whom she spoke, wept, the Marquise remained quite tranquil. Her voice and manner were gentleness itself, and a profound humility marked her words and attitude. She spoke kindly, even affectionately, of Monsieur de Brinvilliers, and expressed solicitude concerning her children's future, begging Pirot to be a mother to those she was leaving.

Her confession to the priest showed a contrite and humbled spirit. The Abbé Pirot speaks of his own emotion, which he says was equal to that of his penitent. He passed the hours of the night, awake, in prayer. Early in the morning he rejoined the "Marquise." She had slept all night, peacefully as an infant.

Madame de Brinvilliers was then called before her judges to hear the act of her condemnation read. She listened calmly, but asked that it should be re-read a second time. One point of the judgment—that she was to be taken to the place of execution in a mule-cart—had shocked and mortified the proud aristocrat. After the reading of the sentence, the condemned was conducted

to the chamber of torture. "Sirs," she said, "I will make you a complete confession. Not that I pretend to escape torture, since my judgment has pronounced that it is indispensable. I assure you that, had I seen three weeks ago the person you sent me yesterday, you would have heard the whole truth at once." She proceeded to make a concise statement of her crimes and the methods she used. The only poisons with which she was familiar, were arsenic, vitriol, and toad's venom; her only antidotes, quantities of warm milk, which she had employed with efficacy on the occasion when Sainte-Croix had attempted to kill her. Her accomplices were Sainte-Croix and the lackey, La Chaussée. No others had ever aided her.

The frankness of her manner struck the Parliament as convincing; but she was, nevertheless, put to the "question extraordinary" the most frightfully painful of all tortures, namely, the introduction of enormous quantities of water into the body by means of a funnel forced into the throat.

During the ordeal, Madame de Brinvilliers displayed the most superhuman fortitude—not a cry or sign of weakness escaped her. When Pirot was called again, he found her lying extended before the fire on a mattress. The priest had left a woman who had become humbled, contrite, gentle, and submissive under his influence. He found a creature mad with pain and mortification, whom internal suffering had again hardened to adamant. She raved against her judges, and denied the evidence of those who had testified against her. Under her torture, the penitent had become once more the haughty Marquise de Brinvilliers, filled with rage, pride, and rebellion against her fate. Little by little, the priest regained his wonderful influence over the arrogant spirit, and led Marie Madeleine to the altar, where she threw herself down in an ecstasy of repentant supplication. As they left the chapel together, Pirot and Madame de Brinvilliers found themselves surrounded by a crowd of fashionable people, come to look at the "Marquise" in her hour of degradation. With level eyes, the prisoner met the

gaze of those about her, and turning to the priest beside her, said, "Sir, surely this is a strange and unpardonable curiosity."

At the door, the little cart was waiting to receive them. The doomed woman, who had donned a coarse, linen garment, the costume of the condemned to death, was lifted into the straw. The priest and the executioner mounted with her, and the mule was sent forward at a foot-pace towards Notre Dame. The crowds were dense, the streets black with spectators; all Paris, high and low, had turned out to see the humiliation of the notorious Marquise de Brinvilliers. As she met the curious eyes of thousands turned upon her, Madame de Brinvilliers' courage flinched for a brief moment. One of the rapid convulsions that disfigured her delicate face passed over it, and turning to the Abbé Pirot, "How is it possible," she cried bitterly "after all that has passed, that Monsieur de Brinvilliers has heart to be alive." The good priest exerted every effort to soothe and calm her. As they passed along the streets, voices were raised in imprecation, others reached them in accents of pity and commiseration. One of Madame de Brinvilliers' greatest faults had always been an overbearing pride. The horrible mortification of the moments she was enduring struck deep into her morbidly sensitive being. An angry gleam shot from her blue eyes, and her features hardened into a fearful rigidity of expression. The sight of Desgrez, the officer who had arrested her at Liège, filled her with sudden anger, and she requested the headsman to change his seat, so that Desgrez might be hidden from her view. But a moment afterwards, remorseful for her display of temper, the "Marquise" told the executioner to resume his former position.

As they proceeded, the courage and fortitude of the prisoner seemed to augment rapidly. She descended from the cart, to kneel, taper in hand, on the steps of Notre Dame, and repeated docily the words of her public confession and repentance. During the remainder of their gruesome drive, a light as of inspiration filled her eyes with radiance. Her words were

gentleness itself. When they reached the Place de Grève, and the appurtenances of her execution came into view, she looked at them without a tremor, speaking to the priest beside her with perfect serenity.

The executioner, leaning forward, urged her to make any denunciations that she might have neglected, and she answered that there remained nothing to say. She had no accomplice living; she was alone and wholly to blame for her crimes, and was ready to answer for them at the Supreme Tribunal. She thanked Pirot with expressions of the deepest gratitude for his ministrations. "'You have promised me," she said, "'not to leave me before my head falls.'" "I could answer nothing, being choked by emotion," recounts the Abbé in his memoires, "She repeated her demand, saying, 'Indeed, Sir, I beg you to pardon me, and not regret the time you have given me. Remember me, and pray God for me.'"

Madame de Brinvilliers then turned to those about her, and asked their pardon for the trouble she was giving, and with a final adieu, mounted the ladder leading to the scaffold. She knelt patiently while the executioner made her last toilette. The luxuriance of her golden hair rendered it difficult to cut quickly, so that the painful suspense lasted nearly half-an-hour. The neck of her gown was torn open, and she, herself, held out her wrists to be tied. The Abbé then chanted the Salve, and the crowds, pressing around the scaffold, took up the chant which was repeated by the masses beyond. Meanwhile Marie Madeleine's face seemed literally transfigured with such divine joy that there was a mumur of admiration from the people as she knelt to receive her death blow.

At that moment the setting sun, illuminating the figure of the kneeling woman, was gilding the distant spires of Notre Dame, and turning to fire the Seine and the windows along the river. There was a hush in all the multitude, then a dull thud! The Marquise de Brinvilliers' head had been severed by one powerful stroke.

The body was carried to the funeral pile prepared beside the scaffold. It was burnt, and its ashes scattered to the four winds of heaven. The crowds who had witnessed the execution, went home that night, crying that never had been seen so impressive and edifying a spectacle as the courage, faith, and humility which shone on Madame de Brinvilliers' face, as she met her fate. Those who had been nearest the scaffold, declared that they had seen the head encircled by a halo as it fell. Her death was considered almost a martyrdom, and Justice, which had wished to strike a lesson of terror into the population of Paris, only succeeded in evoking such a storm of pity and admiration for the dead woman, that the Marquise de Brinvilliers' crimes were forgotten, and she became almost a popular heroine. Poisoning had been made the fashion.

KEYSTONE OF THE XIIITH CENTURY.

DOOR-KNOCKER IN THE HOUSE OF
LA REYNIE, RUE QUINCAMPOIX

CHAPTER XVI

THE SORCERERS OF THE 17TH CENTURY

Madame de Sévigné, writing to her daughter, in 1676, says, "At last it is done. La Brinvilliers is in the air. Her poor little body has been burnt in a great fire. Her cinders are scattered to the winds; so that we are now breathing her, and, by the communication of the small demons of the atmosphere, we will all be taken with a contagion of poisoning humours." The words of the "Marquise" were to come true enough; Paris was to pass through a very epidemic of poisoning. The Brinvilliers' trial and execution had been the one topic of interest to the Parisians during the summer of 1676. The sympathy of society had been evoked by the tragic end of one of its well-known and prominent members. A series of sudden and dramatic deaths, occurring in rapid succession, had impressed and terrified the public. The priests reported, without divulging names, that they were alarmed by the number of confessions they heard, in which their penitents alluded to having been implicated in cases of poisoning. Rumours of a plot against the King and the Dauphin were mooted abroad. The greatest feeling of uneasiness reigned in all classes. Suspicion was rife, and anonymous denunciations and warning letters literally poured into the hands of the police.

Determined to sift affairs to the bottom, and to discover the source and fountain head of so much mysterious crime, the King's Lieutenant of Police, Nicolas la Reynie, instituted enquiries as thorough as it was in his power to make them. His earliest researches yielded him little that was satisfactory,

until his investigations led him amongst the alchemists and magicians who infested Paris at that epoch. A chance allusion, dropped at a supper party, was reported to the chief. It gave him a clue he was not slow to follow up, with astonishing results. The Lieutenant soon perceived that he had discovered the source of the trouble. Courageous and undaunted, he began a systematic attack on what he soon found to be an organised society and association of criminals—already at work in every direction, undermining the foundations of the law, the equity, the religion of the kingdom. It was immensely powerful and difficult to cope with, but La Reynie was no ordinary adversary, and he set to his task of slaying the dragon with all the ardour, devotion, and faith of a St. George.

During the reign of Louis XIV., magicians and sorcerers had almost entirely monopolised the clients of the doctors and apothecaries. Experience had put them in possession of the uses of simples, herbs, and minerals. They were in possession of secret recipes for the concoction of balms for wounds and bruises. They healed broken bones by massage, and treated nervous diseases by hypnotic suggestion. They were, undoubtedly, far in advance of the science of that time, which was hardly worthy of the name. The "wise men and women" did not confine their ministrations to the body. They practised black or white magic, were astrologers, read the future in the lines of the hand, or drew horoscopes by the stars. They had immense influence with the masses, and enjoyed protection from powerful members of society; all classes patronised them, and most believed in them firmly. They were consulted on grave occasions. Had their practices stopped there, all would have been well; but there was a darker side. In a Court where jealousies and ambitions were legion, these people were the natural intermediaries in many a criminal intrigue. Beneath the brilliant surface of life at Versailles or Saint Germain, there was an under-current perpetually flowing. Wherever the Court moved, it carried in its wake the army of those who lived and grew

RUE QUINCAMPOIX, WHERE LA REYNIE LIVED

fat upon its weaknesses and vices. Once started, La Reynie's unerring instinct and unwearying researches soon put him on the track of the information he wanted. In the heart of Paris had grown up a big organisation, from which many branches sprung. Chemists, magicians, alchemists, astrologers were but shoots of the tree whose roots were sorcerers and criminals. Chief amongst the popular sorceresses of the time was a woman named Catherine Monvoisin, commonly known as la Voisin. She openly professed chiromancy, divination, and fortune telling; but the practise of these gifts was no more than the cover for far more varied and sinister practices. La Voisin, whose reputation was considerable, was frequented by most of the ladies of the Court. She was extremely clever, and had extricated more than a few of her clients from embarrassing situations. It became the mode to pay a visit to the sorceress. Her waiting rooms were crowded with clients as distinguished as those of a fashionable doctor to-day. Her discretion was absolute, her resources inexhaustible; her powders, potions, and charms worked like magic. La Voisin's income was semi-regal; for, if her counsels were useful, they were not disinterested. She was a patron of scientific and industrial experiments and enterprises, she interested herself in rising chemists and astronomers, and gave evening parties at which the entertainment was of the choicest. She was of a gallant turn, and though neither young nor beautiful, had many a lover at her feet. She chose them from all classes of society. A hangman or a Minister of State was equally qualified to please, be he stout of heart and person. Solicitous to impress those who came to consult her, the oracle was always sumptuously dressed in fabrics specially woven for her, costly as a queen's coronation robe. She would be waiting her clients in a darkened room, decorated with cabalistic signs, the lights carefully arranged to throw her own face in the shadow, that of her client into relief. A cunning student of the human countenance, observant of all that she touched, conversant—far more so than those who consulted her

believed—with all that passed at Court, it is not surprising that la Voisin's predictions and divinations were often marvellously near the truth.

When, on one occasion, a lady of the Court arrived, masked, the sorceress told her she could not read velvet visages and obliged her to uncover her face. No mean psychologist, the woman summed up quickly and thoroughly those she had to deal with. Did she see that they were of a superstitious frame of mind, she served them with a black mass.

In these sacrilegious and grotesque simulacres she was aided by a horrible old priest, the Abbé Guibourg by name. The supplicant would be completely undressed and laid upon an altar, candles burning on either side, as in a mortuary chapel, the walls hung with sable draperies and symbolic ornaments of silver. The calice was placed upon the nude body, while a newly born baby was held on a silver ewer upon the mock altar. At the moment when the offertory was chanted, the infant's throat would be cut. The blood of the victim would be mixed with that of bats and other gruesome ingredients, solidified into paste, and given to the patient in the form of a wafer. Encouraged by these foul rites, the cases of infanticide and child-stealing became extremely numerous.

La Voisin had another auxiliary, a certain Lesage, an alchemist whose wonderful ability for conjuring had induced him to become a magician. By performing what seemed miracles, and which were nothing more or less than adroit tricks of legerdemain, he exerted the greatest influence over the superstitious population. Those who consulted him believed him infallible. Lesage sometimes worked in conjunction with la Voisin, sometimes alone. He would appear in a long white robe embroidered with black pine cones. To any person who wished to operate against another by influence or by charm, he delivered a small wax ball, with injunctions that after three days it was to be melted in a fire. This was supposed to have a direct influence on the health of the intended victim.

These that we have named were some of the greater luminaries; but there were also a quantity of smaller ones, and of those who aided and abetted them, a very army.

As the magnitude of these extraordinary and criminal mummeries gradually unfolded itself, the upright soul of La Reynie was filled with consternation, and he pursued his inquiries more and more actively. The revelations made by the Lieutenant of Police horrified Louis XIV. He gave instructions that no effort should be spared to purge the kingdom of an infection he had been far from suspecting, and he immediately instituted a special commission to deal with the matter. The tribunal was named "La Chambre Ardente," because, in olden times, all such trials had been conducted in a chamber hung with black and lighted by torches.

The Council assembled for the first time on the 10th of April, 1679, in a room at the Arsenal, and it was agreed that its proceedings should be conducted secretly, to prevent any information being made public, before the Court had pronounced judgment on the cases it had in hand. Four hundred and forty-two arrests were immediately effected. Thirty-six of the prisoners were put to the "question ordinary" and extraordinary.

The "question ordinary" consisted in having ten pints of water poured into the body. The executioner placed the prisoner in a recumbent position, firmly tied upon a table; a block was slipped under the loins, so that the chest and stomach were thrown outward and upward, while the contents of a measure of two pints were forced, by means of a hose, down the victim's mouth. If he resisted, his nose was held until he opened his teeth to breathe. After every two pint measure, he was given a few seconds' rest, and the opportunity to confess; if he continued his denial, the question was reapplied, until the whole ten pints had been consumed. In the "question extraordinary" the quantity administered was augmented to twenty pints. The swelling caused by this unnatural amount of liquid in the body produced the most acute agony.

Amongst the poisoners whose names were revealed by the sorcerers under torture, were several well-known women of position.

The first was that of Madame de Dreux, wife of a member of the King's Parliament. This emulatress of Madame de Brinvilliers was young, beautiful, and noted for her charm and affability. She was, unfortunately, victimised by her passion for the seductive Duc de Richelieu, a nephew of the Cardinal. Her love affairs, and the complications resulting therefrom, induced her to have recourse to the magicians and sorcerers. She was in the habit of frequenting la Voisin, Lesage, and Marie Bosse, from all of whom she had obtained drugs. She had made several ineffectual attempts to dispose of her husband, as well as of the Duc de Richelieu's wife. She had also administered poison to two of her former lovers. She was an assiduous patron of black masses and an ardent believer in all practices of magic. Madame de Dreux was proved guilty beyond all doubt, but her charm and beauty saved her head; besides, she was a close blood relation to three powerful magistrates who brought all their influence to bear in soliciting her pardon. She was released, her friends and family coming to escort her to her home in triumph. She no sooner found herself free than she ran back to the sorcerers and their old recipes. The lesson had profited her but little. She was about to be arrested again, when warned in time, she escaped from Paris. The Court pronounced sentence of banishment from the capital for life; but she was allowed to live in France, on condition it should be under her husband's roof. As fast as one case was judged, another came up. The beautiful Duchesse de Bouillon was gravely compromised, as well as the Duchesse d'Angoulême, and Mesdames de Polignac and de Gramont. The Comtesse de Soissons escaped owing to a word of warning from the King himself. Madame de Poulaillon, of a noble Gascon family, had come to Paris expressly to be able to have frequent access to the magician Lesage and also to la Voisin,

as she wished to dispose of her husband and marry another man. Madame Leféron and Madame Brunet, bourgeoises of the "cité," were both found guilty. They had given large sums of money to la Voisin and Marie Bosse, for powders which had been used with fatal effects.

As the trials proceeded, the revelations extracted from the sorcerers filled the judges with dismay. The circle of those compromised widened day by day. The lists of the guilty increased alarmingly. It seemed that all the nobility of France had been, more or less, in connivance with a band of cut-throats. The oldest and greatest names in the kingdom were soiled.

La Reynie's vigilance and zeal were untiring. He had taken to heart the task he had set himself, and meant to carry it forward against any opposition; and the King supported his Lieutenant of Police. Feeling ran so high against the magistrate that he was obliged to demand an escort of troops, to protect him during the passage from his house to the Parliament. But he remained undaunted by the hue and cry raised against him, or by his growing unpopularity. Louis XIV.'s orders had been that neither rank, sex, nor privileges were to hinder the course of justice. He little suspected what revelations his officer was soon to lay before him. The sorceress "la Voisin" had been executed, but, before her death, she declared that a great number of people of all conditions had addressed themselves to her to obtain poison, and that, if she were a criminal, those for whom she had worked were equally guilty. The odious woman, who died with a certain fortitude, had left behind her the abominable Guibourg, the cunning Lesage, and her own daughter Marguerite Monvoisin, who had served as confidential aid to her mother, and was conversant with la Voisin's budget of crimes and atrocities. These people, and especially Marguerite Monvoisin, made full and complete confessions. They were examined and cross-examined until not an item in their life's history remained concealed. What they had told was recorded by La Reynie and presented to the King.

Suddenly, the Chambre Ardente was ordered to be closed! All papers regarding the girl Monvoisin were subtracted from the records of the Court. An unexpected blow had come like a bolt from the blue and struck the proud monarch. The woman he had most madly worshipped, the mother of his legitimatised children, a creature all beauty, brilliance, and fascination, herself almost a queen by the power her royal lover had given her, had been drawn down into this maelstrom of vulgar crime. The documents La Reynie had sent to the King contained undeniable proofs of her guilt. To such a man as Louis XIV., the shock was a rude one. The most imperious and absolute of rulers, he had grown to consider everything that approached him as inviolable, almost sacred. The King of France lived above judgment or criticism, on a plane removed from that of his mere human subjects; his will had become their law. Yet he, the master and the monarch, had served as puppet in a vulgar tragedy, amidst a crowd of low schemers, the very dregs of the earth. The man and the lover had been all but the victim of that woman whom, despite the laws of God and man, he had raised rank upon rank, until her glittering diadem shone next to his own.

At all hazards the prestige of the crown must be safeguarded. It was surely no tenderness, but outraged vanity and pride, that induced Louis to shield his mistress.

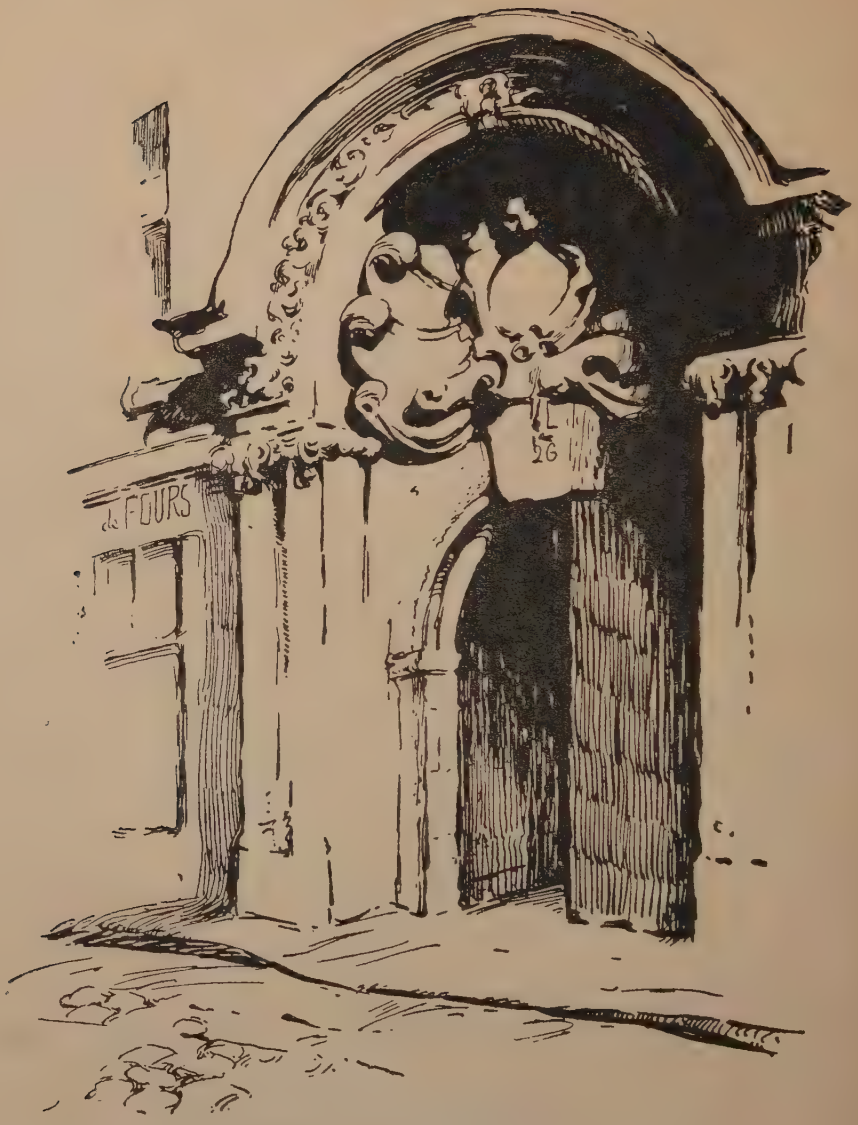
The King remained for hours closeted with the papers La Reynie had brought him. When he summoned his ministers to enter his Cabinet, a heap of ashes lay smouldering in the grate. There was no proof remaining to convict the Marquise de Montespan. But as he watched the destruction of the evidences of his mistress's perfidy, the lover of ten years—sometimes unfaithful, but, nevertheless, a lover—disappeared, to give place to a Judge hard and unrelenting.

To a Ruler who considered himself the fountain head and centre of the State, it was of little consequence that justice should be diverted from its channels, provided it was he himself

who did it. To proclaim the King's mistress a criminal was to touch the Sovereign in person. It was less the lover of Madame de Montespan than the lover of Louis XIV., King of France and Navarre, who destroyed the proofs of his mistress's guilt. Louis was not over nice in his manners or morals; but, at least, he was firmly decided to wash no soiled linen in public.

The news of the closing of the Chambre Ardente was received with relief by society, with surprise by all classes. Only to La Reynie the event caused consternation. He had passed months in researches, until little by little he had discerned the truth, and he now knew all the ramifications of those hideous crimes which he had made it his business to prosecute. Profoundly attached to the person of his sovereign, he had unexpectedly come upon a horrible skeleton in the royal closet, and to a subject so loyal the discovery was a grief of no light nature. But his duty as a magistrate demanded that he should conceal nothing. To continue the work of reorganisation which he had undertaken, it was necessary to proceed with the punishment of the criminals, then in the hands of the law; and yet, to do so was to bring opprobrium upon the throne of France, to weaken the monarchical ideal of absolutism, in which he so firmly believed. But if the guilty were allowed to escape, an opportunity would be lost of setting an example, and of ridding the State of elements which were poisonous to its welfare and progress.

The interview between the King and his Lieutenant of Police was long and painful, humiliating, perhaps, to both: but the iron will of Louis XIV. prevailed. The prisoners, implicated in the various plots, were numerous. If they were cross-examined on any subject, they must divulge all, and their dealings with the favourite would, necessarily, become public. They were never judged, therefore, but simply sent, by letter of cachet, to be confined in the various fortresses of the kingdom, with strict injunctions that they should be carefully guarded and on no account have access to other captives, nor be allowed any conversation with their guardians. To insure against any possibility



LA REYNIE'S HOUSE, RUE QUINCAMPOIX.

of escape, each was fastened with heavy chains to the wall of his cell. For such brutes as Lesage, Guibourg, and others, the punishment was insufficient, but, amongst the mass of prisoners, some were innocent, having merely had the misfortune to be confined in the same dungeons as the sorcerers and to have heard their confidences. They were never liberated, and spent the remainder of long lives immured in solitude and silence. Such was the justice of "Le Roi Soleil."

What passed between the King and his favourite, none ever knew. Had a great dramatist been hidden behind the tapestries during that terrible interview, what a scene might have been recorded of an outraged lover's reproaches, a sovereign's just ire, and the humiliation of the arrogant and beautiful woman who had so long reigned supreme in France! She, who had bent Prime Ministers to her will, who had lived in a suite of rooms denied to the Queen herself, whose journeys had been a triumphal procession, whose caprices had cost millions, left the Royal presence knowing that she was saved, but also irrevocably lost.

Upon the placid surface of Court life no changes were apparent, but, to the few who knew the secret of the Marquise de Montespan's altered mien and humbled attitude, what a drama was being enacted. For ten more years, the former favourite remained in her place at Court. It was the King's command, and also his vengeance. Louis XIV. forgot nothing and forgave nothing; and his mistress saw power, influence, adulation, leave her. She suffered daily the hard gleam of eyes that her slightest glance had once lighted to passion. She received the measure of a formal and distant politeness, which covered but did not conceal contemptuous indifference. And the Court, which had once bowed to her slightest wish, took its attitude from that of the master.

Madame de Montespan, in her disgrace, turned where, whatever had been their lives, most of the women of that epoch eventually sought consolation. The same fanatical faith which,

diverted from its channels, had led her to the sacrilegious altars of the sorceress, reclaimed the superstitious mistress of Louis XIV. On the 15th of March, 1691, she at last obtained permission to retire to the Convent of St. Joseph, which she had founded. Her children made semi-royal marriages, but the King never allowed Madame de Montespan to reappear, or even to see them.

She threw herself into her life of penitence with all the frenzy she had formerly shown as a frequenter of la Voisin's black masses. She became as unrelenting in her self-punishment, as she had been absolute in her ambition. She gave large sums to the poor, as she had once given large sums to the sorcerers and magicians. She spent hours in prayer, slept in rude sheets of coarse linen, and wore, round her delicate waist, the cruel belt of a penitent.

Like other men and women of her day, she was deeply imbued with mysticism. It had led to her crime, as she believed it would lead her back to salvation. The practices had differed, but, in reality, it was the same spirit of fanaticism, and she had been equally true to her character in both phases of her life. She was the outcome of her epoch. Witchcraft, sorcery, and magic, were the result of a profoundly religious influence, which had left humanity a prey to superstition, and had weakened the springs of reason and self-direction. But, notwithstanding the short-sightedness of an autocratic rule that sought rather its own aggrandizement than the eventual well-being of France, the back of charlatanism had been broken. La Reynie's vigilance prevented any renewed outbreak of the fire he had stamped into ashes. Once, in the years to come, it was to flicker into momentary life, and to send an expiring tongue of forked flame dangerously near to the throne. The prestige of aristocratic France was doomed to fall, threatened by the quackery it had done so little to combat.

The house that bears the number 1 in the old Rue St. Claude, was once inhabited by that surprising person Joseph Balsamo,

at a time when he was at the apogee of his renown as Prince of Quacks. Known to history as the Count Cagliostro, he played a prominent rôle in the unfortunate affair of the Queen's necklace —a mystery and scandal that cost Marie Antoinette the loss of her good fame, did much to undermine the prestige of the crown, and was one of the factors in developing and preparing the way for the Revolution.

Here, in the heart of the Marais, after much drifting upon the tides of adversity and over the quicksands of fortune, we find Cagliostro, newly arrived from Strasbourg, where, in the year of grace 1784, he had gained not a little notoriety and celebrity. Born in the city of Palermo, in 1743, son of a shopkeeper, Pietro Balsamo by name, the boy Joseph had passed from a placid, lazy infancy to an idle, scheming youth, climbing gradually rung by rung, up the ladder of rascality, and finding it always easier to trade on and profit by his fellow creatures' weaknesses than to develop any latent strength of his own. He was, Carlyle tells in his admirable essay on quackery and this Prince of Quacks, "a most dusky, bull-necked, mastiff-faced and sinister looking individual; nevertheless, on applying for the favour of the hand of Lorenza Feliciana, a beautiful Roman donzella, dwelling near the Trinity of the Pilgrims, the unfortunate child of Nature prospers beyond our hopes." The partner of Joseph's life was a handsome creature, not too scrupulous, so that the united pair milked more than one fat cow, while progressing along the world's highways. Lorenza's infidelities to her husband were to their mutual advantage, nor did prejudice, on one side or the other, interfere with or mar the harmony of the couple.

The year 1772 found the Signor Balsamo in England. He had gained some knowledge of medicine, professed to even more! His "wine of Egypt" strengthened decrepit beaux, not much to their ultimate advantage. His love philtres had some success with the elderly dames who came to him for counsel. He could take wrinkles from a brow no longer in the flush of youth, or,

if his client were so minded, could initiate her into a mystery of a black mass, conducted with the aid of Lorenza. Gradually, trading, as he went, on the credulity of the poor fools he encountered, the Count Cagliostro—for he had become Count—raised himself laboriously from indigence to ease, and so, by easy stages, to luxury. We find him travelling post in his own chaise—with lackeys standing behind the cushions on which he lolls—to Strasbourg, where his clientèle and fame increase. To the Prince Cardinal de Rohan, who desires to see him, the wily Joseph sends word that, if Monseigneur be ailing, he must wait upon Cagliostro. Cagliostro will cure him; but the Count waits upon no man. And to the Count the Cardinal accordingly goes. It is natural that a Prince of the Church should wait upon the Prince of Quacks.

The foolish Rohan is soon caught in the net of the adventurer. The blundering Cardinal Prince brings his new hero, in his train, to the Court of Versailles, to introduce him to the bored courtiers, always ready for a sensation, and to the light young Queen, Marie Antoinette; finally to plunge them both—Prince Cardinal and Prince Quack—into discredit, disasters, and disgraces, which are to end in the Bastille for the one and for the other banishment from the territories of France. Notwithstanding petitions, appeals, desperate memoranda sent to King, Convention and National Assembly, he will never reappear upon the scene of his triumphs. The master quack's golden days are over; he must take up his wanderings again, without coach and four or lackeys to await his pleasure. Driven from land to land, he roams restlessly. Powders, charms, wines of Egypt have gone out of fashion: their reign ended with that of Cagliostro.

The Revolution had come, with its evils, but also its immense good.

Men were to learn to think for themselves, and from the twilight fogginess of mysticism, to walk forth into the broad, sunlit spaces of reason.

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